

GAZETTE DES BEAUX-ARTS

JANUARY 1946



C O N T E N T S

THE *AKATHISTOS* OF THE HOLY VIRGIN IN RUSSIAN ART, BY NATHALIE SCHEFFER. ¶ THE STATUE OF *GANYMEDE* AT THE WALTERS ART GALLERY, BALTIMORE, MD. BY CLAUDE-CLAIR FRANCIN, BY MARVIN CHAUNCEY ROSS. ¶ THE WHITE HOUSE FURNITURE AT THE TIME OF MONROE, BY HANS HUTH. ¶ HUMANISM AND THE CONTEMPORARY PRIMITIVE, BY PAUL M. LAPORTE. ¶ BIBLIOGRAPHY.

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NEW YORK—NINETEEN EAST SIXTY-FOURTH STREET

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THE *AKATHISTOS* OF THE HOLY VIRGIN IN RUSSIAN ART

DURING Lent the Russian Church holds special thanksgiving services in commemoration of the deliverance of Constantinople in the VII and VIII Centuries from the unfaithful.¹ At the vigil services of the Fourth Week, passages from Isaiah's prophecies² are read which describe events of the Old Testament similar to the calamity of this besieged Christian capital. The libera-

1. The *Synaxarion*, a liturgical book with the account of events commemorated, mentions three sieges of Constantinople namely, the years 626, 673 and 717; AKAFIST B. M. PAPADOPULO-KERAMEVS, in: "Vizantiiskii Vremennik," 1903, X, p. 357-401.

2. Lent office book called *Tridion*.

tion of Constantinople from the enemy, a victory attributed to the miraculous intervention of the Holy Virgin, is celebrated on Saturday of the Fifth Week³ by a hymn of praise and gratitude, namely, the *Akathistos*.⁴

This religious poem, partly sung and partly read by the priest and the choir, comprises alternately short and long stanzas (thirteen *kontakions* and twelve *oikos*)⁵ and in its translation from Greek into Slavonic, flows in the form of blank verse.⁶ The first seven stanzas are devoted to the Incarnation of Our Lord, but the most harmonious part of the hymn consists of pictorial emblems glorifying the Mother of God.



FIG. 1. — XI-XII Century. — Our Lady "Nerushimaia Stiena." — St. Sophia Cathedral, Kiev, Russia.

The Holy Virgin is personified as "the sweet scented incense," "the meadows of bliss," "the mystical dawn of the day," "the shelter of the word more spacious than the clouds," "the rock that satisfieth the thirsty," "the pillar of fire guiding those who are in darkness," "the manna," "the land of promise," etc. Appeals addressed to the Holy Virgin by the shepherds, the Magi, the Egyptians and the angels are characteristic for every group: "Rejoice, O Mother of the Lamb!" exclaim the shepherds; "Rejoice, O Star revealing the Sun!" appeal the Magi; "Rejoice, O Sea that drowned Pharaoh!" invoke the Egyptians; "Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride, Alleluia!" sing the angels.

The *Akathistos* was first sung only in the churches of

3. *Subbota Akafista* in: "Voskresnoe Chtenie," 1838, No. 49, p. 416.

4. *Akathistos* i.e. "not sitting." While in other similar hymns the people are permitted to sit, this hymn is to be heard standing.

5. The *kontakion* is a short hymnodal summary of the character of the feast; the *oikos* is a stanza longer than the *kontakion*.

6. *Sostav i iskusstnoe slozhenie Akafista* in: "Voskresnoe Chtenie," 1839-40, p. 489-492.

Constantinople as a hymn of gratitude for the liberation of the city. In the IX Century St. Theodore of Studion inserted its office into his monastic regulations (*typikon*) and in 1070 St. Theodosius, father of monasticism in Russia, introduced the rules of the Studion monastery into the Great Kievo-Pecherskaia Lavra.⁷

In Russia the *Akathistos* became extremely popular as a prayer and its poetical structure was used as the ideal pattern for all later Russian religious hymns of praise. Even the historical event mentioned in the *Akathistos*, although referring to Constantinople, was associated by the Russians with their own history.

The "Indestructible Wall" of the Byzantine Empire, an emblem of the Holy Virgin evoked in the twelfth stanza, "Rejoice O indestructible Wall of the Kingdom," became the "*Nerushimaia Stiena*"—the indestructible wall of Kiev, where the gigantic mosaic of the Virgin-Orante in the Cathedral of St. Sophia (XI-XII Century) is known by this name (Fig. 1).⁸ Russian heroic legends (*byliny*) describe the Holy Virgin as the fortress, the hope, the "Wall of Kiev."⁹ In ancient



FIG. 2. — XVII Century. — Our Lady "Akafistnaia." — Mt. Athos.

7. The Kievo-Pecherskaia Lavra (Cave monastery) was founded by St. Anthony in 1013. Before his retirement in 1073, he appointed St. Theodore first abbot; N. ODINTSOV, *Poriadok obshchestvennago i chastnago bogosluzheniia v drevnei Rossii do XVII veka*, St. Petersburg, 1881, p. 34-43; ARKHMANDRIT SERGII, *Polnyi miesiatsestov Vostoka*, Moscow, 1875, I, p. 122 and app. p. 47.

8. N. KONDAKOV, *Ikonografiia B. M.*, St. Petersburg, 1915, II, p. 386.

9. A. VESELOVSKII, *Iuzhno-Russkii Byliny*. "Vasilii-P'ianitsa i Batyi," St. Petersburg, 1881, p. 265-66.

songs of Novgorod,¹⁰ She sheds bitter tears over the fate of the Russian city. The ceremonial part of the Virgin's vestment, namely the embroidered handkerchief on the Kiev mosaic, could have been explained at that time by Her tears.

The miraculous power of the *Akathistos*, as a prayer, is emphasized in Russian religious pamphlets such as the "*Zvezda presvietlaia*"¹¹ (the shining star), where chapters are devoted to the enumeration of healings performed by the mere reading of the hymn. In art the *Akathistos* provided painters and mosaic workers with new subjects. The verses which describe events of the New Testament were developed into compositions for murals, while the epithets used for the Holy Virgin inspired new symbolic images.¹²

As far as is known, the first manuscripts of the *Akathistos* appeared in Russia in the XI-XII Centuries,¹³ but the earliest murals which depict its verses in their successive order belong to the XIV Century¹⁴ and decorate the church of the Therapontas monastery at Volokolamsk. Pictures of the *Annunciation*, the *Visitation*, the *Nativity*, the *Adoration*, the *Flight into Egypt*, the *Purification*, cover the walls of the church in a continuous flow of imagery. They are completed by pictures of the Oecumenical Councils on which the dogma of the Incarnation, specially emphasized by the *Akathistos*, was proclaimed.

Miniature paintings of chosen verses of the hymn also form colorful borders on some icons of a later period. To such belong *Our Lady "Akafistnaia"* of Mt. Athos (Fig. 2), and the *Annunciation* by Simon Ushakov (Fig. 3).¹⁵ On the first icon the anonymous artist keeps close to the conservative scheme prescribed by the "Manual for icon-painters" of the XVII Century (*Ikonopisnyi Sbornik*),¹⁶ while Simon Ushakov treats the same subjects quite freely, introducing in his composition complex groups of figures, realistic battles, fantastic landscapes with suspension-bridges and elaborate architectural details. Of the twelve miniatures forming the frame of Ushakov's *Annunciation* the most interesting is the first, which represents the siege of Constantinople (Fig. 4).

At the top of the picture the inscription reads: "To Thee, O Mother of God, unconquered Empress, do we, freed from evils, offer thanks for victories achieved" (*Vzbrannoi Voevode*). These are the words of the first *kontakion*, the only part of the *Akathistos* clearly referring to the intercession of the Holy Virgin,

10. A. VESELOVSKII, *Mielkiia Zamietki k Bylinam*, in: "Zhurnal Minist. Narod. Prosv.," St. Petersburg, 1885, XII, p. 186-88.

11. V. PERETS, *Opisanie "Zvezdy Presvietloi"*, in: "Universitetskii Izvestiia," Kiev, 1911, II, p. 80-88.

12. PERE S. SALAVILLE, *An Introduction to the Eastern Liturgy*, London, 1938, p. 90.

13. A. POPOV, *Pravoslavnye Russkie Akafisty*, Kazan', 1903, p. 34; MSS XII century of the Moscow Synodal Library, No. 319.

14. V. GEORGIEVSKII, *Freski Ferapontova Monastyria*, St. Petersburg, 1911, p. 99.

15. The icon belongs to the church of "*Our Lady Gruzinskaia*" in Moscow.

16. Collection Filimonov.



FIG. 3. — XVII Century. — The Annunciation with the *Akathistos*. — Moscow.



FIG. 4. — First Kontakion of the Akathistos; the siege of Constantinople. (Detail.)

eral stages of the siege are depicted on the image.

In the upper corner people in the city, surrounded by enemies, implore the Holy Virgin for succor and protection; warriors, armed with bows and arrows,

patron of the Byzantine Empire.¹⁷ To Her were attributed the victories; under Her protection the city was left during the absence of the Emperor; Her image accompanied the army to wars; Her veil (*maphorium*) and Her belt, highly venerated relics kept in the church of Blachernae, were in times of disaster carried around the walls of the city for protection.¹⁸

Ushakov, for the illustration of the siege of Constantinople, used as material, tales of pilgrims and descriptions of the event inserted in the Russian chronicles.¹⁹ Following them he places the decisive assault of the enemy at the bridge²⁰ and the church of Blachernae²¹ near the sea. Sev-

17. A. KIRPICHNIKOV, *Istoricheskii Obzor Izobrazhenii B.M.*, in: "Zhurnal Minist. Narod. Prosv." 1897, VII, p. 59-60; CHALADON, *Les Comnènes*, Paris, 1912, p. 490.

18. KHR. LOPAREV, *Tserkovnoe Slovo O Russkom Pokhodie na Vizantiuu*, in: "Vizantiiskii Vrem.," 1895, II, p. 583-4.

19. *Sobranie Russkikh Lietopisei*, IX, 9; *Lavrentievskaiia Lietopis'*, St. Petersburg, 1872, p. 20-21.

20. E. TEVIASHEV, *Osada Konstantinopolia Avarami i Slavianami v 626 g.*, in: "Zhurnal Minis. Narod. Prosv.," 1914, VIII, p. 233.

21. A church connected with the famous Blachernae existed also in Russia. Greek architects, who came in the XI Century to build the church of the Kiev-Pecherskaia Lavra had, as they said, a vision in which the "Queen of Blachernae" ordered them to erect "for Herself a church in Kiev." The spot, where this legendary conversation took place, was shown to Russian pilgrims in the church of Blachernae in Constantinople. See: F. TYRNOVSKII, *Izuchenie Vizantiiskoi Istorii i Eia Tendentsioznoe Prilozhenie k Drevnei Rusi*, in: "Universitetskiiia Izvestiia," Kiev, 1874, IV, p. 229.

repulse from the walls the assault of the troops; horsemen emerge from the gates, pouncing on the assailants in a hand-to-hand fight. The battle rages. Dead bodies fall under the blow of the swords, horses trample the fallen men. The decisive moment of the victory occurs when the procession, carrying the holy relics and the image of Our Lady of Blachernae, approaches the sea. In the lower left corner of the picture Patriarch Sergius dips the veil (*maphorium*) in the waters. Suddenly a violent tempest breaks out. The ships of the enemy are wrecked, sinking with all on board.

It seems strange to find a realistic picture of human cruelty on an icon meant for prayer, but wars are described even in heaven (*Apoc.* XII, 7) and battles are glorified in Psalms as the proper victory of justice over evil (*Psalms* XVII, 38-46; LXXXIII, 15). The first *kontakion* of the *Akathistos*, illustrated by Ushakov, is by itself a curious combination of a battle-song and a prayer.²² The painter renders this contrast by the peaceful sanctity of the Annunciation, pictured in the upper right corner of the composition, and the military valor of the battle. His militant composition is completed by the joyful angelic appeal: "Rejoice, O unwedded Mother. Alleluia." The same melodious chant is repeated at the end of each *oikos* of the *Akathistos*.

The legend says that the image of "Our Lady of Blachernae" was carried for the last time at the head of the Greek army in the year 1204, when Constantinople was conquered by the Latins. The image fell into the hands of the enemy. From this time on numerous legends arose about the fate of the venerated image.²³

The icon of the Moscow Uspenski Cathedral (Fig. 5), known as *Our Lady of Blachernae* is connected with one of these legends. This image was brought to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich from Constantinople in the year 1654, accompanied by a charter testifying that it was "the same as the one which protected Constan-



FIG. 5. — Our Lady of "Blachernae." — Uspenski Cathedral, Moscow.

22. *Istoricheskoe Znachenie Akafista*, in: "Voskresnoe Chtenie," No. 1, 1837, p. 416.

23. N. KONDAKOV, *Khristianskie Pamiatniki na Afonie*, St. Petersburg, 1902, p. 141.

tinople during the invasion of 626."²⁴ On this icon the Virgin is pictured in the type of the *Hodegetria*, i.e., holding the Child on Her left arm. Evidences exist that on the icon which accompanied the Greek army to wars the Holy Virgin was represented in the type of the *Hodegetria*.²⁵ Therefore on all Russian icons *Our Lady of Blachernae*, who is believed to have been one of the most venerated images in Constantinople,²⁶ appears as the *Hodegetria*.

Many compositions were inspired by verses of the *Akathistos*, even whole stanzas were illustrated in the successive order of the verses. For example, the fourth *oikos* is depicted word by word on an icon of the XVII Century (Fig. 6). According to its contents the Holy Virgin sits on a throne, surrounded by angels, with the Lamb instead of the Child on Her bosom ("The shepherds hear the angels praise the presence of Christ in flesh and they beheld Him as a blameless Lamb on Mary's bosom"). At the left of the central group opens the door of Paradise ("Rejoice, O Key of the doors of heaven"). On the right side an angel converses with the shepherds ("Rejoice, for the earthly things exchange glad tidings with the heavenly"). The abyss of hell gapes amid a rocky landscape showing the fall of Satan ("Rejoice, O Thou who didst cause Hades to die"). Apostles and Evangelists in an animated group preach the Nativity of Christ ("Rejoice, O unsilenced mouth of the Apostles"). A hovering angel protects saints entering the gates of Paradise ("Rejoice, O unconquerable might of strivers"). In the right lower corner snow-white sheep lie asleep in a rocky enclosure which personifies the Mother of God as protector of the Christian flock²⁷ ("Rejoice, O fold of the sheep endowed with speech").

A verse of the sixth *oikos* of the *Akathistos* "Rejoice, O rock, that satisfied the thirsty," inspired the subject for the image known as the *Kamen' nerukosiechnoi gory* ("Rock cut out without hands") (Fig. 7). Here the Holy Virgin personifies the sky from which the rock fell.²⁸ Her vestment, adorned by symbols of the heavenly bodies, is woven from nebulous clouds. She holds "the heavenly Ladder on which God descended on earth." A rock with a hewed off stone reposes on Her bosom. The stone is Christ of Daniel's prophesy which reads: "A stone was cut out without hands and the stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (*Daniel*, II, 34-35). Over the rock is the image of Christ surrounded by the walls of the heavenly city of Jerusalem referring to the words of the same Prophet: "And in the days shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (*Daniel*, II, 44).

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Hodegos* means "leader."

26. A. DMITRIEVSKII, *Opisanie Liturgicheskikh Rukopisei*, Kiev, 1895, I. p. LXIX N. KONDAKOV, *Khristiansk. Pam. na Afonie*, p. 149.

27. FADDEEV, *Arkheologicheskiiia Ekskursii* in: "Russkii Arkheolog. Institut v Konstantinopolie, Izviestiiia," 1898, III, p. 214.

28. I *Cor.*, X, 4: "and the rock was Christ."

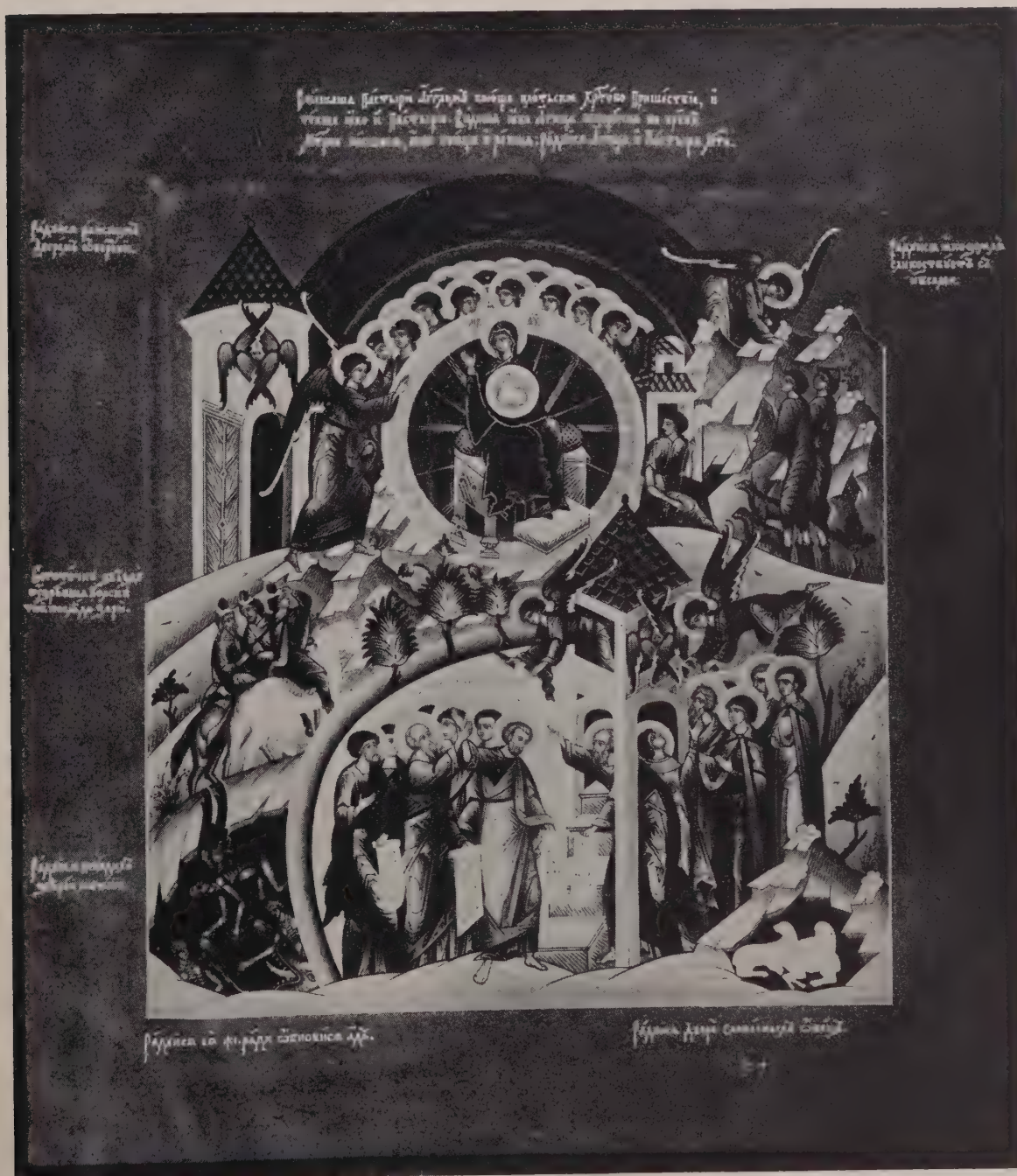


FIG. 6. — XVII Century. — Fourth *oikos* of the *Akathistos*. — Formerly, Likhachev Collection, St. Petersburg.



FIG. 7. — XVII Century. — *Kamen' nerukosicchnoi gory*. ("Our Lady of the rock cut out without hands".) — Formerly Likhachev Collection, St. Petersburg.

Neuviadaemyi zviet "Our Lady of the fadeless rose" (Fig. 8), is inspired by the fourth stanza of the *Akathistos*: "Rejoice, O flower of heavenly growth." The image represents the Mother of God in imperial vestments with a crown on Her head and a rose in Her hand. This composition was adopted in Russia from Western art in the XVII Century.²⁹ The icon known as *Svietopriemnaia sviecha*, ("Our Lady of the Light") pictures the Holy Virgin in full length holding a candle. People raising their hands from a dark abyss implore Her help. On this composition the Virgin, according to the eleventh *oikos*, appears "unto those in darkness, having kindled the immaterial light." Many details on symbolic icons were taken from

the *Akathistos*, for example, in the composition "Our Lady of the Burning Bush," the star in which the image of the Virgin is inserted refers to the eleventh *oikos*: "Rejoice, O star revealing the sun."³⁰

The laymen as well as the clergy were allowed by the Russian Orthodox Church to compose hymns of praise on various subjects. The poems were accepted after being censored by the Holy Synod.³¹ But even the required perfect knowledge of the Ecclesiastic Slavonic as well as of the Holy Writ and of the Lives of Saints, did not guarantee the desired results. The difficulty of its traditional form and of the achievement of its peculiar beauty is best described by Anton Chekhov in his conversation with a monk ferrying him across a river

29. *Vtoroi Arkheologicheskii S'ezd*, St. Petersburg, 1881, II, p. 386.

30. N. KONDAKOV, *Ikongrafia B.M.*, II, p. 386.

31. A. POPOV, *Prav. Russ. Akafisty*, p. 614, 617-22.

on Easter night.³² The monk was mourning the death of his friend, deacon Nikolai: "Besides all other human qualities," said the monk, "Nikolai had an extraordinary gift. He had the gift for writing hymns of praise."

"Is it difficult to write them?" I asked.

"There is great difficulty, sir. You can do nothing by wisdom and holiness if God has not given you the gift. The monks, who don't understand, argue that you only need to know the life of the Saint for whom you are writing a hymn and to make it harmonize with other hymns of praise. But that's a mistake, sir. What matters, is the beauty and the sweetness of it. Everything must be harmonious, brief and complete. There must be softness, graciousness and tenderness; not one word should be harsh or rough or unsuitable. In the canticle of the Holy Mother are the words 'Rejoice, O Thou too high for human thought to reach! Rejoice, O Thou too deep for angels eyes to fathom!' The monk hid his face in his hands as though frightened at something and shook his head. 'Rejoice, O tree that bears the fair fruit of light. Rejoice, O tree of gracious spreading shade under which there is shelter for multitudes'? To think that a man should find words like those! There are no such words in conversation or books! For



FIG. 8. — XVII Century. — *Nevviadaemyi zviat*. ("Our Lady of the fadeless Rose.")

32. A. CHEKHOV, *Easter night*, translated by C. GARNETT. London, 1927.

brevity he packs many thoughts into one phrase and how smooth and complete it all is! Apart from the smoothness and grandeur of language, sir, every line must be beautified in every way; there must be flowers and lightning and wind and sun and all objects of the visible world. And every exclamation ought to be put so as to be smooth and easy for the ear: 'Rejoice, Thou flower of heavenly growth!' It is not simply 'Heavenly flower,' but '*flower of heavenly growth!*' Hymns of praise, sir! That's a very different thing from writing a sermon or the history. Our Father Archimandrit comes from Moscow Academy, the Father Sub-Prior studied at the Kazan Academy, we have wise monks and elders, but would you believe it, sir, no one could write hymns of praise, while Nikolai, a simple monk, a deacon, had not studied anywhere, but he wrote them! A marvel! a real marvel!"

NATHALIE SCHEFFER.*



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AT THE WALTERS ART GALLERY, BALTIMORE, MD.

THE STATUE OF
G A N Y M E D E
BY CLAUDE-CLAIR FRANCIN

CLAUDE-CLAIR FRANCIN¹ was the son of the sculptor, François Francin, and his mother was the daughter of a member of the Coustou family of sculptors, which means that he grew up in an atmosphere of sculpture from his childhood. He studied with his father and his uncle, Guillaume Coustou. In 1730 he won the sculpture prize and in 1731 went off to Rome to study until 1736.²

1. S. LAMI, *Dictionnaire des sculpteurs de l'Ecole Française au dixhuitième siècle*, Paris, 1910, I, pp. 354 ff; THIEME-BECKER, *Künstler-Lexikon*, Leipzig, 1916, XII, p. 327; A. JAL, *Dictionnaire critique de biographie et d'histoire*, Paris, 1872, pp. 609-10; J. GUIFFREY, *Le tombeau du Maréchal de Saxe par Jean-Baptiste Pigalle*, in: "Nouvelles Archives de l'Art Français," 1891, pp. 167-8; M. FURCY-RAYNAUD, *Correspondance de M. de Vandières, Marquis de Marigny, Directeur Général des Bâtiments du Roi, sur l'Administration des Beaux-Arts*, in: "Nouvelles Archives de l'Art Français," 1903, pp. 146, 207, 220, and 1904, p. 271; L. COURAJOD AND A. MICHEL, *Catalogue sommaire des sculpteurs du Moyen Age, de la Renaissance et des Temps Modernes*, Paris, 1907, no. 679.

2. J. J. GUIFFREY, *Brevets des pensionnaires à l'Académie de Rome*, in: "Nouvelles Archives de l'Art Français," 1879, p. 366.



FIG. 1. — CLAUDE-CLAIRE FRANCIN. — *Ganymede and the Eagle*. — Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore. — (Side view.)

In 1737 he executed sculptures for the Palace at Versailles,³ and began exhibiting in the Salon which he continued to do until 1745.⁴ Among the models exhibited there were those for sculptures which he designed for the facades and portals of churches such as Saint-Roch,⁵ the Oratory and the Theatins, all destroyed during the Revolution.

In 1740 he married a daughter of Pierre Lepautre, a sculptor of considerable reputation. In 1748 Francin went to Bordeaux to complete the sculptures on the famous square, because Verberckt who had started the sculptures could not return to complete them. Francin's work is the most admired of all the sculptured details on this much-admired square.

In 1765 he returned to Paris where, in 1767, he was elected to the Academy.

He died near Paris on March 18, 1773.

The Walters Art Gallery has recently been presented with Francin's *Ganymede and the Eagle* which has often been mentioned in literature but never adequately illustrated. The statue was commissioned by Louis XV through the Controller-General, Orry, in 1742, and was intended to adorn the gardens of the palace at Versailles. The price

agreed upon was 10,000 livres. The plaster model was exhibited at the salon in 1745. Due to his activities at Bordeaux the statue was still incomplete at the time of Francin's death in 1773.

3. Cf. L. DESHAIRS, *Les bas-reliefs des petits autels de la chapelle de Versailles*, in: "Revue de l'Art Ancien et Moderne," 1906, XIX, p. 230.

4. L. GILLET, *Nomenclature des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, architecture, gravure, lithographie, se rapportant à l'histoire de Paris et qui ont été exposés aux divers Salons . . .*, St. Denis, 1905, p. 50, nos. 110, 111 and 112.

5. J. COUSIN, *Notice historique sur les monuments de sculpture de l'église Saint-Roch à Paris*, in: "Revue Universelle des Arts," 1859, IX, p. 127.



FIG. 2. — CLAUDE-CLAIRE FRANÇIN. — Ganymede and the Eagle. — Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore. — (Front view.)



FIG. 3. — CLAUDE-CLAIR FRANCIN. — Ganymede and the Eagle. — Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore. — (Detail.)

Then in 1777 the Count de Maurepas, Minister of the King, wanted a statue for his chateau at Pontchartrain. It was suggested to the King, who agreed, that the *Ganymede* be completed and presented to the Minister. Dupré was the sculptor selected to finish the statue. The correspondence on this last phase of the work is of sufficient interest to quote:

From Jean-Baptiste-Marie Pierre, *Premier Peintre du Roi*, to the Abbé Terray, *Directeur Général des Bâtiments du Roi*, . . . "Par la même occasion, on ferait passer du dit atelier à la Salle des Antiques, la figure en marbre du Ganymede commencée par feu M. Francin, et que le s^r Dupré doit terminer."⁶ Then, later, D'Angiviller, *Directeur Général des Bâtiments du Roi*, wrote to the same

Pierre on the 15th of February of 1777: "M. le Comte de Maurepas, Monsieur, m'ayant témoigné désirer une figure de marbre pour en orner ses jardins du Pontchartrain, j'ai mis cette demande sous les yeux de S. M. qui l'a accordée, et a bien voulu faire don à ce ministre d'une figure déposée dans la Salle des Antiques, et qui est depuis plusieurs années sans destination. C'est le Ganymede de M. Francin auquel il reste néanmoins la dernière main à donner. M. Dupré, élève de M. Coustou, en succédant à une place de M. Francin, a été chargé de terminer cette ouvrage. C'est pourquoi il est à propos que vous le mandiez et que vous disiez qu'il s'occupe fortement de cet ouvrage. Je présume que cela ne sçauroit être long; aussitôt que cette figure sera en état d'être livrée, vous me ferés le plaisir de m'en avertir afin que je donne l'ordre de la délivrer."⁷

⁶ . . . The opportunity could be used to move from the workshop to the Gallery of Antiques, the marble statue of *Ganymede* started by the defunct M. Francin and which the Sieur Dupré is to finish." M. FURCY-RAYNAUD, *Correspondance de l'Abbé Terray, Contrôleur Général des Finances et Directeur Général des Bâtiments du Roi, et M. D'Angiviller, Directeur Général des Bâtiments du Roi, avec le Premier Peintre du Roi, Jean-Baptiste-Marie Pierre*, in: "Nouvelles Archives de l'Art Français," 1905, p. 11.

⁷ "The Count de Maurepas, having expressed to me his desire of having a marble statue to decorate his gardens of Pontchartrain, I submitted the request to His Majesty who granted his consent and was kind enough to donate to this Minister a statue lodged at the Gallery of Antiques and which had been there for several years without definite assignment. It is the *Ganymede* by M. Francin which still requires final retouchings to be completed. M. Dupré, pupil of M. Coustou, who succeeded M. Francin, has been charged with finishing the work. That is why it would be opportune for you to address him and tell him that he should actively proceed with the work. I do not believe this would take too long; as soon as the statue has reached the state in which it can be delivered, you will please me by advising me, so that I may give orders for its delivery." M. FURCY-RAYNAUD, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

From this, and from the fact that Francin had been paid 8,500 of the 10,000 livres, it would appear that the statue was in large measure his own, but had been finished by a pupil of his relative Coustou. We can safely assume, it seems to me, that Francin's *Ganymede* remains about as he intended it to be.

From the collection of the Count de Maurepas the statue passed into that of the Count d'Havrincourt. In the last war it was removed to the Museum at Valenciennes by the Germans, and later to the Museum at Cambrai where the Count found it.

Later it was acquired by Mr. Henry Walters, at which time there was a protest made in France because of its removal to America. It remained in the Walters' New York house until sold at auction by Mrs. Henry Walters.⁸ It was acquired by Mrs. Ralph K. Robertson who presented it to the Walters Art Gallery.

Although greatly admired by the French for his sculptures on the buildings at Bordeaux,⁹ Francin is today not especially well known. Although the *Ganymede* was not completed by him, it was yet mostly his work, and we can safely use it to judge of him as a sculptor. In forming a judgment of Francin it might be of interest to quote excerpts from letters written back to France by Wleughels, the Director of the Académie de France in Rome.

In a letter of January 24, 1732, Wleughels wrote of Francin "... *Pour le sculpteur, il dessine et paroît avoir volonté de bien faire* ..."¹⁰ On May 1

8. Sale Catalogue, Mrs. Henry Walters, New York, April 30-May 3, 1941. No. 1379. The statue is 6' 4" in height.

9. C. SAUNIER, *Bordeaux (Les Villes d'Art Célèbres)*, Paris, 1909, p. 70.

10. "... As to the sculptor, he is sketching and seems to have the desire to do well ... " A. LECOY DE LA MARCHE, *L'Académie de France à Rome d'après la correspondance de ses Directeurs*, in: "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," 1869, II, p. 185.



FIG. 4. — CLAUDE-CLAIRE FRANCIN. — *Ganymede and the Eagle*. — Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore. — (Side view.)

of the same year he wrote: "... *Je vais choisir un marbre, le plus beau que je pourrai trouver, et je ferai faire la figure trouvée depuis peu. Je suppose que le s^r Francin, qui a toujours travaillé chez M. Coustou, où on sçait ce que c'est que de travailler, n'y aura pas étudié en vain. Il a commencé ici une tête du Caracalla; mais, comme les opérations du marbre sont longues et que l'on ne peut juger d'un ouvrage que lorsqu'il est fini, je ne peux, sur celui qu'il fait, porter un jugement décisif. Mais il ne peut que bien faire, ayant travaillé si longtemps dans une si bonne école...*"¹¹

A letter of January 29, 1773 contains the following: "... *J'ai fait placer dans le grand salon le buste du Caracalla que Francin vient d'achever. C'est un des plus beaux bustes qui soient dans Rome, et la copie est faite avec bien du soin et est bien travaillée. J'espère que ce sera encore un bon sujet à envoyer en France.*"¹² Finally in a letter of February 3, 1735, Wleughels wrote: "... *Francin travaille bien le marbre; d'un génie froid, il est ici en país où il peut l'échauffer et devenir habile par de bonnes études.*"¹³

I quote these letters of Wleughels because, being written by a contemporary responsible for Francin while at the Academy in Rome, they show in the beginning a caution about the young sculptor but with a growing appreciation of his work.

Wleughels hoped that Italy would warm the "*génie froid*" of Francin. The *Ganymede* shows that he was only partly right. The statue is still rather cold. On the other hand, Francin demonstrates that he belongs with the other Rococo sculptors of France. The slender *Ganymede* is quite different from the heavier figures of Louis XIV's day. The composition is involved and altogether complicated and there is about it a sweetness which one identifies with the Rococo.¹⁴

Yet the statue is far more pleasing and satisfying than the earlier *Ganymede* by an unidentified sculptor which still stands in the gardens at Versailles, at the foot of the stairway leading to the terrace. Francin proves himself in this group as a sculptor of his time, a Rococo spirit with more than a touch of the neo-classicism which was to come.

MARVIN CHAUNCEY ROSS.

11. "... I will select a marble, the best I can find, and I will have the recently found statue done. I suppose that the Sieur Francin who has always worked at M. Coustou's, where they know how to work, will not have studied there in vain. He has begun here a head of Caracalla; but, as work on marble is slow and one cannot judge of a work until it is completed, I cannot give a definite opinion of the work he is engaged on. But he cannot help doing well, having worked for so long at so good a school..." A. LECOY DE LA MARCHE, *op. cit.* p. 271.

12. "... I have had the bust of Caracalla which Francin just finished, placed in the large Salon. It is one of the most beautiful busts we have in Rome, and the copy has been made with great care and is good. I hope it will make another good subject to send to France." A. LECOY DE LA MARCHE, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

13. "... Francin works the marble well; his genius is cold, but he is here in a country where he can warm it up and become skilful through good studies." A. LECOY DE LA MARCHE, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

14. Cf. C. R. POST, *A history of European and American sculpture*, Cambridge, Mass., 1921, II, pp. 26 ff.



THE WHITE HOUSE FURNITURE AT THE TIME OF MONROE

THERE has always been much confusion about the French furniture of the White House purchased by James Monroe, President (1817-1825), although there has certainly never been any lack of publicity about it.

The official version of the case was first publicized in two successive issues of "Niles Weekly Register" (Baltimore):

Nov. 15, 1817 — FOREIGN — "We see it mentioned in a Philadelphia paper, that a vessel has arrived at Alexandria from France with furniture for the house of the President of the United States. Some small matters, we suppose, that could not have been obtained at home."

Nov. 29, 1817 — FRENCH INFLUENCE — "A good deal of noise has been made in the papers about certain furniture imported from

France for the President's House. It turns out as we expected — the furniture consists exclusively of porcelain, minor plate and carpets, and a few of such other articles as are not manufactured in the United States."

Some more comprehensive information was given by the "Intelligencer" (Washington) :

Nov. 29, 1817—" . . . we do not deny that several of the articles which constitute the furniture of the President's House have been imported from France, but they consist only of such articles as cannot in the present state of our manufacturers be made in this country—such as looking glasses, of which the plates, even if the frames could be made here, would necessarily be imported; silk and damask for curtains and chairs of which we have no manufactory yet in our country, some ornamental clocks, of which we have not yet attempted the fabric, and a piano . . . All the furniture for the small saloon, sitting room, dining room and bedroom are made or in making in the city of Washington. There is not a chair in the President's House which has cost more than such as are to be seen in the drawing room of a merchant in Philadelphia and New York . . . particular care was taken to have as much furniture made at Washington as possible . . . the President gave positive instructions that all his cut glass, should be purchased at Pittsburg."

All these statements were only partly correct, as the shipment contained a considerable amount of furniture and plate and no carpets at all: but they were well-intentioned, meant to draw public attention away from a subject apt to be entirely misinterpreted. However, hushed up, it proved to be just the wrong policy, as the papers continued to "make fuss about what is really very trifling" ("Franklin Gazette," Philadelphia, September 5, 1818). The reason was that just at that time the situation was getting rather difficult for some branches of manufacturing which had tried to compete with European-made goods. This is corroborated by a letter addressed to the publisher of "Niles Weekly Register" by the glass manufactory of Bakewell, Page and Bakewell, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and published on August 30, 1819: ". . . it is about ten years since the commencement of our establishment and before our business was oppressed by the excessive importation of foreign glass, we gave employment to near a hundred hands and maintained about four hundred persons; at present we find it difficult to furnish the work for ten.

"If at the ensuing session of congress such means are adopted with respect to domestic industry, as will best promote the real and substantial interest of the community, instead of the mistaken policy hitherto pursued, it will soon be confined to the East or the West, the North or the South, but that under the pro-

tecting influence of a mild and we hope we may add paternal government, they will excel in arms, as they have in arms throughout the republic . . .”

It seems somewhat ironical that it should just have been a member of the firm of Bakewell who made these comments, however justified they may have been, as Monroe had taken special interest in this manufactory and, as we shall see later, had placed a large order with this establishment. Notwithstanding such facts, prominent voices like these became influential. Thus domestic manufacturers received aid against competition from abroad by protective tariffs since 1824. As to the Executive Mansion, Congress made a special law in 1829 prescribing that



FIG. 1. — PIERRE-ANTOINE BELLANGÉ. — Pier table. — The White House. *Courtesy of National Park Service, Washington, D. C.*

furniture “purchased for use in the President’s House shall be as far as possible of American or domestic manufacture.”

Though most of these issues came up long after Monroe had shaped his plan of how to decorate the Executive Mansion, for a quarter of a century thereafter, Monroe’s French furniture seems to have constantly aroused injured feelings with certain groups in Congress. The facts concerning this furniture lend an amusing touch to the election campaign of 1840 when William Henry Harrison was opposed by Martin Van Buren. While the famous “log cabin” slogan created to characterize Harrison was long ago proved to be a wrong issue, the phrase about Van Buren’s “extravagance” has not been entirely discarded, though it is built on quite as mistaken reasoning as the former.

Its origin is probably due to a famous speech by Congressman Charles Ogle,¹ of Pennsylvania, in which he addressed the House of Congress on April 14, 1840. In this harangue, Ogle arranged facts about the purchases of furniture for the White House—going back to Monroe—in a rather confused way, in order to blame Van Buren for indulging in “court splendour,” while even finding some excusing words for Monroe. Not satisfied with trying the patience of the House by reading endless numbers of vouchers paid years ago by Monroe and his successors, Ogle had his speech which had been skipped in the “Debates of the House,” printed, and offered it to clubs “1000 for 20 dollars.”

Evidently, this monstrous attack was politically successful, but it failed completely to block the additional expenditure of \$3,000 for furniture. It should be added also that throughout the years when the Executive Mansion had to be re-furnished after the catastrophe of 1814, both Houses always devoted adequate sums for the purpose. But struggles naturally were frequent, and it may well be that current legends and the inaccurate history of the Monroe furniture may have originated in these early parliamentary discussions.

When Monroe came into office in March 1817, the President's House, rebuilt after its destruction by the British, was bare and empty, and the East Room not even completed. While no large State receptions were pending during the summer and the President was traveling through the country, there was no immediate need for the mansion to be made habitable at once. However, by the fall, Monroe wished to move in and in order to complete the necessary preparations, William Lee, who had been American Consul in Bordeaux, was charged with this task.

Lee's first step was to examine the furniture that the Madisons had used at their residence on the northwest corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Nineteenth Street. These articles had been hastily collected at auctions and at second-hand stores to suit urgent needs, with the result that, except for a few items — “chairs for the dining room, a set of old French chairs for a chamber, two pier-tables and one sideboard for the dining room, old silver to be exchanged for new plate”² — everything was so “worn out as to be of no use.” While this makeshift arrangement could be excused as long as the President had to put up with a temporary residence, Monroe held that the Executive Mansion would have to be furnished in a perfectly adequate way. This he thought was no small matter and he revealed his opinion sometime later in a message to Congress when a new appropriation had to be made:

“The furniture in its kind and extent is thought to be an object, not less deserving attention, than the building for which it is intended.

1. CHARLES OGLE, *The Regal Splendor of the President's Palace*, [Washington], 1840.

2. WILLIAM LEE, *Letter to Congress* in “House Documents,” Vol. VI, Document 143, 15th Congress, 1st Session, 1818.



FIG. 2. — PAUL-PHILIPPE THOMIRE. — Minerva clock. — The White House. Courtesy of National Park Service, Washington, D. C.

Both being national objects, each seems to have an equal claim to legislation sanction . . . The person who may happen to be placed by the suffrage of his fellow citizens in this high trust, having no personal interest in these concerns, should be exempted from undue responsibility respecting them.”³

There was scarcely half a year to complete the arrangement of the President's House. To do this in conformity with the idea of the President, who wished to procure a permanent arrangement in true harmony with the

dignified building, it was practically impossible to rely only on resources that the American market was able to offer. As for the idea that it might have been considered strange to order articles needed for a government building from abroad, even such a ‘fastidious Argus’ as Ogle had to admit that “many of the articles deemed proper for the President's House could not at that time have been procured in the United States.”

This was, of course, true of carpets, bronzes, and some other objects, but furniture of the finest quality could have been secured in the United States without even thinking of a cabinet-maker such as Duncan Phyfe (1768-1854). But as Monroe wished to have his equipment showing an ensemble of uniform effect, this undoubtedly could only be achieved by giving the order to Parisian artisans who might even have had the desired goods in stock. Furthermore, buying fancy goods in the French capital was by no means unusual for any government, since Paris was the center for industrial arts, where many of the courts, from Stock-

3. JAMES MONROE, *Message to Congress* in “House Documents,” Vol. IV, Document 9, 15th Congress, 1st Session, 1818.

holm to Madrid, purchased their entire furnishings.

As Monroe had been Minister to France, he was perfectly familiar with conditions abroad; therefore, this whole undertaking must have seemed a very natural one to him. So, on April 23, 1817, he wrote to the firm of Russell and Lefarge at Le Havre, asking them to act as his agents but not to mention for what purpose the furnishings were intended. A complete list of the desired objects which were to be "strong, massive and durable" was included, everything being specified and prices exactly indicated . . .⁴ The French firm had exactly three months to act—from June 15 to September 15; even for Paris this must have been a rather short time to fill a big order.

Meanwhile, the President and his adviser foresaw that the appropriation would scarcely be sufficient to cover the French order and the rest of the articles which were needed to equip the house even modestly, not to mention the vast East Room. Facing this situation, Monroe offered his own furniture to be bought by the Government under extremely generous conditions. An unpublished letter⁵ to Colonel Samuel Lane, the Commissioner of the Office of Public Buildings, tells us about this deal:

"Washington, April 28, 1817.

"Sir:

"It appears after the order sent to France and the contracts already made here and in Philadelphia, that there will be a considerable deficiency in the sum appropriated for furniture for the President's house and there being little if any on hand, fit for immediate use, it may be advisable to retain from my furniture, such articles as may be found proper and indispensable.

"I have a small service of excellent plate, made for my own use by the best artists in France and England, which, with the articles I have now ordered from France and those to be manufactured out of

4. No copy of the letter of Monroe to Russell and Lafarge could be found. The original vouchers and some other papers concerning purchases in this country and abroad for the purposes of the White House are kept at the General Accounting Office under Misc. Treas., 1. Auditor (by various settlement numbers). They have been consulted up to 1861 and the following ones have been used: 37131, 43754, MONROE; 55314, ADAMS; 70467, JACKSON; 61369, 75138, VAN BUREN; 93470, 96137, POLK; 102509, TAYLOR; 113810, PIERCE; 136728, BUCHANAN.

Official copies of vouchers and other papers up to and including the Presidency of J. Q. Adams are kept with the Papers of the House of Representatives, 18th Congress, 1st Session, Box 3, Package 19, in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. This bulk of material has been used, though no source is ever indicated, by ESTHER SINGLETON, in the preparation of her book *The White House*, New York, 1903. Most of these items concerning expenditure have been reprinted by this author; most are correct, some misunderstood, but none brought into relation with the objects which are, or have been, at the White House. Later books about the White House furnish no additional source material for the period we are concerned with here. The period antedating Jefferson, however, has been covered in a brilliant study by MARIE G. KIMBALL, *Jefferson's Furniture for the White House*, in "Antiques," June, July, 1929. Many vouchers concerning expenditures have been reprinted in the *Report on Furniture of the President's House, 1842*, in "House Reports," No. 552, 27th Congress, 2d Session, Vol. II. Other minor sources are to be found in: *Descriptive Catalogue of Government Publications of the United States*, Washington, 1885.

5. General Accountant's Office, Misc. Treas. 1. Auditor's Settlement 43754, No. 86.



FIG. 3.—Minerva clock and two bronze candlesticks.—The White House. *Courtesy of National Park Service, Washington, D. C.*

the old plate will make a full service such as is commonly used in France. I have also dining room, drawing and bedroom furniture, French China and kitchen furniture, all of good quality and in good taste.

"I am willing to dispose of these articles at the price at which they may be valued by two citizens of the first respectability, assisted by persons skilled in the manufacture of such articles, or I will dispose of the plate only by valuation there being but few purchasers of that article, and of all the other articles at public sale, as you think most advisable. I enclose a list of those articles. They are still in the house I lately occupied and will be shown and delivered to you by one of my servants, who attends there for the purpose.

"I shall be content to wait for the payment until another appropriation be made or to retake my own furniture, should no appropriation be made, my object being to supply the present demand in a

mode, by which the public cannot lose, and to apply the money now appropriated in the purchase of the articles of the best kind and on the best terms, for the new building which it is expected will be finished by the time they arrive.

[Signed:] JAMES MONROE."

This letter makes clear that the arrangement was made for the sole purpose of meeting a difficulty which the Government was facing. Monroe's conditions were accepted and the inventory was made in the house of the President⁶ and duly witnessed by two "citizens of the first respectability," namely S. Mason and General J. P. van Ness, and three experts, Charles A. Burnett, manufacturer and dealer in plate and ornamental furniture; William Worthington, cabinet-maker and upholsterer; Alexander Joncherez, dealer in glass and chinaware. The estimate running up to \$9,071 was acknowledged by the Treasury but the amount was not paid to Monroe until March 4, 1822.

Although by that time there were three sources for the installation, still more furniture was necessary, and Lee had to get in touch with a number of craftsmen and firms as purveyors.⁴ Besides, a quantity of old furniture had to be altered, renovated, or upholstered. Lee had been Consul in Bordeaux; he knew what type of furniture was to be expected from France and thus was well prepared to coordinate the French goods with the choice he was about to make on the American market. Indeed, it ought to be considered as quite an achievement that Lee was able to assemble a remarkable little staff at the capital to carry out the various orders. In later years, even up to the time of President Buchanan, most of the large orders had to be placed in Philadelphia or New York.

The cabinet-makers employed were William Worthington and William King, the former having acted as one of the experts in evaluating Monroe's furniture. Minor orders in cabinet-making were given to Friedrich Polck and William Mechlin. Upholstery was supplied by Charles Alexandre and René de Perdreauxville. Perdreauxville held a particular position as he established a special workshop to execute work for the President's House. Besides making upholsteries, he also directed cabinet-making of fine quality. Carpeting mostly of the "Brussels" type as well as imported goods were procured from R. M. Boyer in Georgetown and William Hickey in Washington. Silverware came from Charles A. Burnett, another of the experts who had appraised Monroe's furniture. He traded in some old silver, undoubtedly Madison's "bruised and injured silver to be exchanged for new plate."² Glassware was bought in Pittsburgh, at the Flint glass factory of Bakewell, Page and Bakewell. Monroe had inspected the manufactory in 1817 on his passage through Pittsburgh and had been much impressed by the high standards of the

6. United States National Archives, Office of Buildings, Misc. Vol. XXIV, 2455. Monroe's house still exists; it is located at 2017 I Street, NW., and is now the home of the Arts Club of Washington.

establishment. As a consequence, Monroe placed an order for a rich table set of cut glass, including six pairs of quart decanters engraved with the United States arms, priced at \$1,032. It might be mentioned that in 1830, Bakewell again furnished a rich table set worth \$1,451.75. No remainder of either set can be identified among the glassware in use at the White House at present. Gilt frames for pictures—among them the famous *Portrait of Washington*, which Dolly Madison had rescued—were furnished by Isaac Cooper of Washington, while Benjamin Lincoln Lear supplied three marble busts carrying the names of “Amerigo Vespucci, Columbus, and Washington.”⁷

Not one piece of the American furniture coming from Madison, Monroe, or newly executed in 1817-1818, can be identified at the White House today. There are at present only a few pieces which might date from this period and thus might



FIG. 4. — DENIÈRE and MATELIN. — Hannibal clock. — The White House. Courtesy of National Park Service, Washington, D. C.

7. SINGLETON, *op. cit.*, 108, states that these three marble busts had originally been at Mount Vernon, and that after the death of Mrs. Washington they had come into possession of B. L. Lear. Benjamin Lincoln Lear was the son of Tobias Lear, Washington's secretary, by his first wife, Mary Long, from Portsmouth, the niece of Mrs. Washington; while his second wife, Fanny, the widow of George A. Washington, was Martha Washington's niece. George Washington was Benjamin L. Lear's godfather. The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, Mount Vernon, kindly furnished information that no such busts were included in the executors' inventory of the mansion following George Washington's death. They are also not mentioned in the executors' account of sales after the death of Mrs. Washington. As long as Mrs. Singleton's statement is not corroborated by any proof, it remains highly doubtful whether these busts ever were at Mount Vernon. Quite as doubtful are the names given to these busts which already appear on Lear's voucher. There is a possibility that the three busts had at one time found asylum in the Congressional Library, because it is known that three marble busts—of *Columbus, Vespucci* and *Washington*—were destroyed by the fire which damaged the library in 1852.

have had their origin in these sources.⁸ Perhaps it would have been better for the preservation of this part of the equipment if the "fuss" and "noise" made in the papers had been aimed just at these objects. But just the French furniture was accused of being too rich and gaudy. This so-called splendor may have served to preserve quite a number of French items — though their style was contrary to the fashion of the day — throughout the latter part of the XIX Century.

Concerning the French furniture, we are fortunate enough to be able to gather some detailed information from the bill and an accompanying letter sent by Russell and Lafarge. These details have never been published from the original file still kept at the General Accounting Office.⁹ An exact interpretation of these documents accompanied by an examination of the stock of furnishings actually in use at the White House, make it possible to eliminate some of the prevailing traditional but nevertheless confused ascriptions, in order to restore correct data.

The bill states that the furniture was made by the "first *ébéniste de Paris* of the name of Bellanger." Though the spelling is not quite correct, there can be no doubt that Pierre-Antoine Bellangé (1760-1844) is meant. Bellangé had acquired mastership under Louis XVI, and had been clever enough to keep on going, in spite of the Revolution. He managed to serve all the courts which followed until he finally became *ébéniste du roi* under Louis Philippe. Shortly before he received the American order he had refurnished the *petits appartements* at Chantilly for the Duc de Bourbon, after the latter had returned from exile. As Bellangé rarely signed his products, it is difficult to find authentic pieces of furniture from his workshop. However, a signed chair from his last period, about the time he executed the Monroe furniture, is kept at the State *Garde Meuble* at Paris.

This piece is certainly not an outstanding example of its kind, but there is no doubt about its elegant shape and its excellent craftsmanship. As not one of the sofas or chairs sent to America has survived, this chair might be regarded as a possible example, though it may be presumed that the lost pieces showed somewhat more rigid forms, in view of their purpose and of the fact that they were carved with ornaments of olive twigs, and gilded throughout. This furniture was covered with crimson silk woven with laurel designs. The sofas were probably curved, as they had to be, owing to their length of nine feet and to the fact that they had to fit into an oval-shaped room. A type of stool without back or arms called "tabouret" was also represented. There were four such pieces with legs in "X" shape. With these Mr. Ogle was especially disgusted, for, as he pretended, they might produce the adoption of foreign etiquette regulating the very compli-

8. The glassware made for President Monroe was described in the "Pittsburgh Mercury" of November 10, 1818. See also G. S. MCKEARIN, *American glass* [1941], p. 140 and plate 48, 4 for pieces which may have formed part of this set.

9. The letter from Russell and Lafarge printed by SINGLETON, p. 109. Some excerpts from the original French bills (General Accounting Office, 37131, No. 3) appear in the Appendix.



FIG. 5. — Hannibal clock, bronze vases and sconces; portrait of John Quincy Adams by G. H. Healy. — The White House. *Courtesy of National Park Service, Washington, D. C.*

cated rights of those who were allowed to sit on tabourets or the various other kinds of chairs in the presence of the head of the State.

Since all the seating accommodations, as well as two screens, are no longer in existence, it is fortunate that at least one piece has survived as a sample of the whole set. This is a gilded piertable, with a marble slab and a mirror back (Fig. 1). Its measurements are exactly as indicated by the bill; it has olive decorations and in general represents the type of furniture we might expect. This piece shows features of the so-called empire style, but it is very sturdy and heavy in its appearance and demonstrates perfectly well the declining of a

decorative phase which was graced by so much poise twenty years earlier. The piertable was the last of the Monroe furniture to leave the place which was assigned to it in 1817. Some time after 1887 it was placed in the diplomatic assembly room on the ground floor where it still stands.¹⁰

Besides the furniture for the oval room, Bellangé provided several tables, decorated with gilded bronzes, for the other rooms. All traces of these have been lost. It is interesting to note that Monroe had ordered all the furniture to be executed in mahogany. The French agents, however, substituted a gilded set for the oval room, pretending that mahogany was not generally permitted in the "saloon

10. The piertable measures: height 1,08 meter; width: 1,89 meter. This corresponds exactly to the measures as indicated in the bill: height 3 *pieds français* 10 *pouces*; width 5 *pieds français* 10 *pouces*. In photos of the Blue Room taken in the 80's the piertable is still to be seen in its original position in the Blue Room.

even of a private gentleman." Some doubt should be raised about this statement. Moreover, by 1820, gilded furniture was getting out of fashion and mahogany was becoming a perfectly legitimate material for elegant use. At exactly the same time the Elector of Hesse equipped his palaces at Cassel, without regard for cost, and, following designs by Percier and Fontaine, he almost exclusively used mahogany furniture, richly decorated with bronze. Exactly the same is proved by the designs shown in contemporary periodicals like the *Collection de la Mesangère*.

There is another incident with regard to White House furniture. It seems that Monroe had ordered eagles to be placed on the chairs, probably as carved decorations. The President had also handed a personal letter of his to a friend named James Brown, a member of the Baltimore firm of Brown, Younger and Co., when he went abroad, for delivery to Russell and Lafarge. This was done and Brown reported to the President as follows:¹¹

Le Havre, June 4, 1817 — ". . . I gave him your letter . . . He informed me that he had directed the eagle to be placed on the chairs and some other parts of the furniture, but that the bird being in bad repute at court the workmen were ordered to desist and told that special permission must be obtained to enable them to execute the work. For this purpose, Mr. Russell's partner sets out for Paris next week. Presume, upon giving proper assurance that this bird of evil omen will speedily take flight to America, he may be permitted to perch upon the furniture of the Government house."

As the furniture was formally decorated with olive branches and not with eagles, the permission was evidently not given—if it was ever asked for. As apparently nobody seems to have minded about sconces or curtain rods showing eagles, this little story seems somewhat doubtful. There was even more sales talk in Russell and Lafarge's letter as they maintained that manufacturers were making only trifling profits, or were even losers, and clocks without nude figures were supposedly difficult to get. Maybe they were right, however, in their statement that the big chandelier had been ordered by the French government, and the order had been cancelled, but the "bronzier" was probably very well satisfied to get rid of this chandelier at a bargain price. Perhaps this story also offers a clue to the reason why the gilded furniture was substituted for a mahogany set, and olive branches for eagles; then too, Bellangé might have had some furniture in stock which he had not been able to dispose of earlier. While this deal may have been a good bargain for the cabinet-maker and agent, the "gilded" furniture, never ordered by

11. Library of Congress, *Letters to Monroe*, Vol. XVI.

Monroe, ever after proved to be a rather unfortunate purchase according to the target it offered to unscrupulous politicians.

The makers of the bronze wares are not indicated in the bill. Fortunately, however, some of the principal objects are signed, though there could not have been much doubt about the makers. Among the first-rate bronzeworkers of the time there are two who were outstanding and who received the bulk of orders from the court households of Europe. These were "Thomire, Duterne & Co.," and the firm of "Denière et Matelin."

A clock showing a seated figure of Minerva (Fig. 2) and two accompanying candelabras, now in the Blue Room and Lower Hall of the White House (Fig. 3), were made by Paul Philippe Thomire (1751-1843) who had largely furnished supplies for the palaces of the Tuileries and St. Cloud.

"Denière et Matelin" supplied the clock showing Hannibal (Fig. 4) and two candelabras going along with it, now in the Oval Room on the ground floor (Fig. 5).

Of all the other French bronze candelabras and sconces which were purchased, only one pair is still in existence, now in the Green Room.

As the most outstanding piece among the French furnishings there was a plateau, a set of decorations for a State dinner table. This set is composed of large mirror plates with richly decorated balustrades as a basis on which to set elabo-



FIG. 6. — Attributed to the Manufacture of the Duchess of Angoulême. — China Vase with the "Blind Belisaire." — The White House. Courtesy of National Park Service, Washington, D. C.

rately worked baskets, supported by female figure, two tripods, and two vases, the latter now in the Green Room. The whole set was executed in bronze, finely shaped and gilded, by Denière et Matelin, as is proved by their signature on one of the bases. This *surtout* must be regarded as one of the finest examples of this kind of decoration, so much in vogue in that period.

All the curtains, gilt rods, curtain pins, etc., as well as the carpet made by Roget and Sallandrouze, no longer exist. One pair of china vases with paintings showing Homer and Belisarius has survived, now in the Red Room (Fig. 6). They might have been made at the *Manufacture de Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême*, owned by P. L. Dagoty, for Dagoty is mentioned as having furnished a dessert set. There are no traces of these vessels today, nor of the French china dinner set.

The piano was purchased from Sebastian Erhard (1752-1831), Parisian pianomaker of wide renown. This piano later gave special concern to Mr. Ogle when he discussed the point that Van Buren had traded it in for another one built of rosewood.

The plate was composed of two sets of flatware and two large tureens. Of the flatware there are some silver gilt knives with mother-of-pearl handles inlaid with little gilt shields for engraved initials which have resisted the wear and tear of time. Both large tureens are still in use. They are magnificent specimens of craftsmanship, created, as was the rest of the set, by J. A. Fauconnier (1776-1839). Shape and design reveal the perfect taste of the artist, a pupil of Odiot, Napoleon's favorite silversmith, who was just beginning to become famous about 1817.¹²

Recalling once more what is left of the goods shipped from France, there is one pier-table, some candelabras and clocks, two china vases, a few knives, and finally, bronze and silver decorations for the dinner table. These scattered fragments make it difficult to form an idea of how the original White House setting must have looked. However, by patiently piecing together items from various written sources, it is not impossible to reconstruct the scene of Monroe's Presidency. An inventory drawn up immediately after Monroe had left the Executive Mansion on March 24, 1825,¹³ indicates only very briefly the objects which were placed in various rooms. But a number of furnishings can be identified as to their origin or their makers, by using several other documents for interpretation of the inventory. These documents are: Inventory of Monroe's furniture sold to the government, Lee's letter to the House of Representatives concerning Madison's furniture,² and the vouchers which have to do with expenditures under the Presidency of Monroe.⁴

12. Another important French silver set which should be mentioned here was bought by the Government in 1833 for use at the Executive Mansion. The former owner was the Russian Minister, General Baron de Tuyl, who had been living at the Decatur House on Lafayette Square. A part of this set has survived and is on exhibition in the China Room at the White House.

13. Inventory of the White House from 1825, printed in "House Executive Documents," No. 2, 19th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. I. Next inventories are those of 1849, and 1865 (in the United States National Archives, "Office of Public Buildings," Misc. 3096, January 1, 1849; Misc. 3713, May 26, 1865). Later inventories in the files of National Capital Parks, Washington, agency in charge of the duties formerly held by the Office of Public Buildings.



FIG. 7. — G. VOLLMER. — Set of furniture, Philadelphia, 1869. — Smithsonian Museum, Washington, D. C.

During Monroe's time the arrangement of the State Rooms on the first floor was somewhat different from that at present. Entering the Mansion from the north through the hall and making a tour around the building beginning in the north-western corner one would pass the Ushers' Lodge, State Dining Room (now the Private Dining Room), a stair-case and the President's Cabinet (both united in 1902 to form the present large State Dining Room), the President's Ante-Chamber (now the Red Room), Drawing Room (now the Blue Room), Card Room (now the Green Room), East Room, and an empty room corresponding to the Ushers' Lodge on the other side (now the stair-case).

How the walls were decorated and whether or not there were dadoes, must remain an open question, except for the fact that we know that there were five cases of wallpaper sent from Paris valued at more than 6000 francs. So it must be assumed that the walls were all covered with paper except for the hall which is certain to have been stuccoed from the beginning. All the floors were made of parquetry and every room had one chimney-piece except for the East Room, which had four. The present mantles in the Green and Red Rooms were taken out of the former so-called President's Cabinet in 1902 and are both supposed to be parts of the original furnishings of the house, though one of them can only have been set up some time after Monroe's occupancy. All the other mantles in the State Rooms date from the latter part of the XIX Century. In 1902 floors, walls, and ceilings were stabilized and completely renovated so that no traces of the original status can any longer be obtained.

As is the case today, any visitor at the time of Monroe would have entered the mansion from the north. He would pass the Ushers' Lodge, scantily furnished with a table, an old cot and a screen but "no mirror where a lady could even put her bonnet straight," then he would face a row of four columns separating the hall

from the corridor that connected all the rooms. Two big fireplaces, four mahogany settees, two console tables, an oilcloth carpet, a barometer combined with a thermometer, and a lamp, constituted the entire furnishings of this hall.

A distinguished guest, invited to have dinner in the company of some State representatives at 6 o'clock would be ushered straight into the Drawing Room (now the Blue Room), where the President would meet him. James Fenimore Cooper describes his impression when he was received by President Adams in 1825:

"... the drawing room was an apartment of good size, and of just proportions . . . It was furnished in a mixed style, partly English and partly French, a custom that prevails a good deal in all the fashions of the country. It was neat, sufficiently rich without being at all magnificent, and, on the whole, very much like a similar apartment in the house of a man of rank and fortune in Europe . . ."¹⁴

Cooper's statement about the "mixed style" sounds strange, as we know that the entire decoration of this room came from Paris, and even the curtains were arranged according to a drawing sent from France. Anyhow, it differs favorably from Mr. Ogle's exaggerations in 1840 concerning the "regal splendor" of this room, thereafter often ironically called "Ogle's room."

There were a large number of chairs and other accommodations in the room (twenty-four chairs, some of them armchairs, two sofas with pillows, six footstools, four stools), all lining the hall, the sofas probably standing on either side of the piertable which doubtless faced the fireplace.

The four stools were arranged in the three window recesses from whence you could observe "the blue and wide rolling Potomac and its intervening shores." The dominating colors in the room were gold and crimson.

The curtains and coverings were cut from the same rich satin showing laurel ornaments with rosette borders. The curtain rods, splendidly gilded, were topped by carved eagles holding bundles of arrows in their claws.

Probably the wallpaper matched in colors, as did the Aubusson *velouté* carpet showing the American coat of arms as a centerpiece.

While the mantelpiece was decorated with the Minerva clock accompanied by a pair of mantle branches formed by female figures holding crowns composed of six branches, and two French china vases, decorated with landscapes, the piertable was adorned by a marble bust supposed to represent Washington. This is perhaps the one called the "unknown man," which is now placed in the niche of the corridor. On either side of the mirrors topping the mantelpiece and piertable

14. J. F. COOPER, *Notions of the Americans*, Vol. II, p. 54, Philadelphia, 1828.

were appropriate places to fix the two pairs of sconces which are listed, while the great chandelier, its shaft covered with a red scarf and set with fifty candles, spread light throughout the room. Chairs were tremendously crowded, though there was more room then than now as the two jib doors did not exist at that time. The remainder of the French gilt set was used to furnish the President's sitting room above the Blue Room.

After the guests had assembled in the Drawing Room they proceeded in the Dining Room across the hall for dinner. Let us see what Cooper tells us about this room:

"The dining room was in better taste than is common here, being quite simple and but little furnished. The table was large and rather handsome. The service was in china, as is uniformly the case, plate being exceedingly rare if at all used. There was, however, a rich plateau and great abundance of the smaller articles of table-plate. The cloth and napkins were fine and beautiful."¹⁴

There is no doubt that Cooper's statement about the Dining Room's scanty furnishings was entirely correct. Probably this room offered the most difficult task to Lee, as he had to piece its furniture together from various sources. The two piertables with marble slabs came from Madison, while the two sideboards must have been the former property of Monroe. A new large sideboard and a dining table consisting of four parts were made by William Worthington. Twenty chairs from the Madison house were altered when they were placed in one set together with sixteen others also made by William Worthington; all were covered with black haircloth. Placed on one of the piertables was the marble bust of *Amerigo Vespucci*, possibly to be identified with one of the busts presently in the

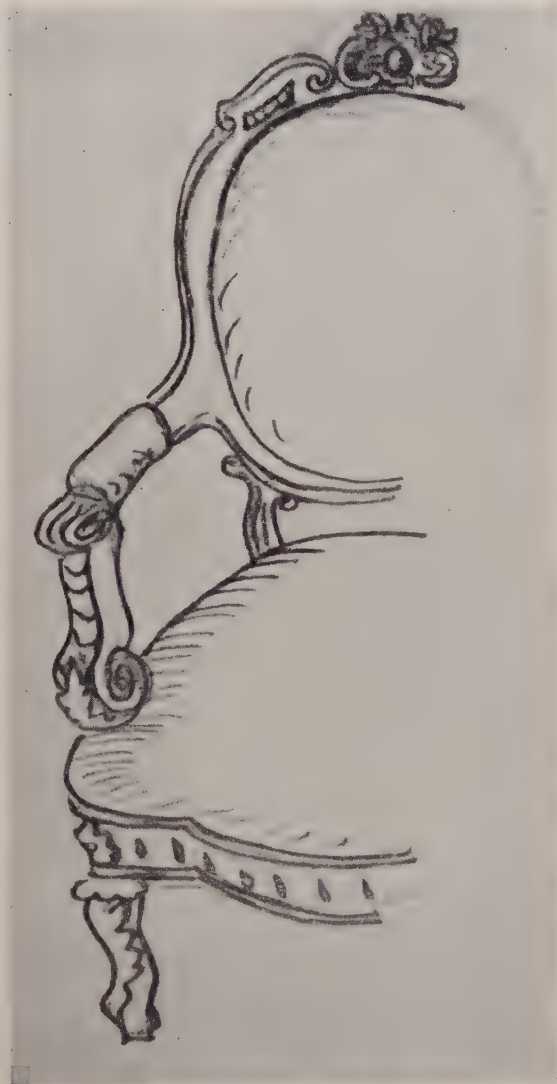


FIG. 8. — Armchair from the set of furniture made by G. Vollmer, detail.

Assembly Room. Two small chandeliers hung from the ceiling while some sconces were probably applied to the wall on the side of the fireplace. Rather puzzling is the indication in the inventory that there were three sets of crimson curtains fixed to gilt cornices, while there are five windows. This might indicate that some window recesses were converted into closets, as indeed a butler's pantry was partitioned off during the latter part of the XIX Century.

For large parties like the so-called Drawing Room evenings, the three adjoining Reception Rooms on the south side were thrown open. Occasionally the East Room was made use of, though it was scantily furnished and must have made a rather dreary impression. There were in it only four mahogany sofas and twenty-four armchairs made by William King. These, however, were uncovered and remained so until Jackson had the entire room completed and furnished in 1829. When Lafayette was a guest in 1825, the East Room served as a convenient storage place for all the presents he got, as it was already being used to keep odd household articles.

The Card Room (now the Green Room), between the East Room and Drawing Room, must have been used, as the name indicates, by guests retiring for whist, or, if needed, for large receptions.

The color of its green wallpaper made it "odious to the ladies from the sallow look it impends." The French pier-table like the one in the corresponding Ante-chamber (now the Red Room) was made of mahogany with gilt bronze, both of them probably being placed between the windows. They were surmounted by mirrors, as were the mantelpieces, and decorated with two French candelabras. There was also a mahogany writing table with a green cover, probably the one made in Perdreauxville's workshop and most likely placed near the fireplace where it would receive light from the two candelabras on the mantelpiece and from the French lion-head sconces on both sides of it. The French bronze luster, decorated with a green silk scarf around the shaft, was richly ornamented with female figures blowing trumpets. Two card tables, probably those from Monroe, may have stood at the north and west wall opposite each other; one was plain, the other had claw feet. Lining the wall, were fourteen green silk-bottomed chairs matching the green silk curtains. There were dimity curtains with fringes in this as well as in all the other rooms. Two French china vases possibly adorned the mantle; they were decorated with paintings showing Passy and the house in which Franklin had lived while he was Minister to France.

The corresponding room on the other side of the oval room (now the Red Room), served as an Ante-chamber to the President's Cabinet. Here distinguished visitors were received when they called on the President in the daytime. In the evening it was used to take care of the overflow of the Drawing Room.

When Duke Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar visited Washington in November

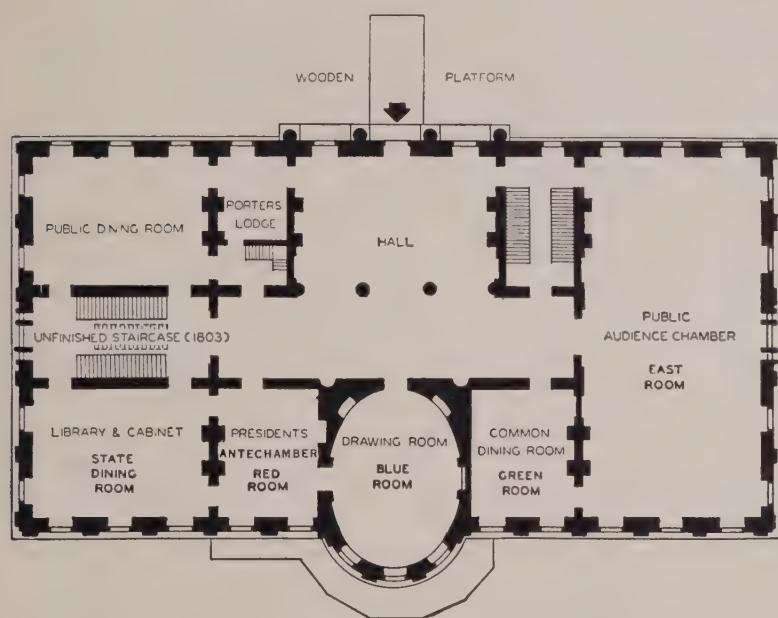


FIG. 9. — Plan of the White House ground floor in 1803. (From: "House and Garden").
Courtesy of National Park Service, Washington, D. C.

1825, he was "... received in a handsomely furnished apartment. Beautiful bronzes ornamented the mantle and a full-length portrait of George Washington hung on the wall."¹⁵

In Monroe's time this room was called the Yellow Room, probably on account of the color of the wallpaper, though there is no definite proof that the wallpaper was really yellow. If this were the case, it must certainly have been in startling contrast to the color of the chair covers, for we

know that Friedrich Folck made a sofa and fourteen chairs which were upholstered and covered with scarlet cloth by Charles Alexandre. For trimmings, 111 yards of black material, made out of 21-1/2 yards of cloth, were used. This seems to indicate that narrow stripes were formed, perhaps to make some kind of pattern like a meander ornament. The scarlet curtains were decorated in the same way. Thus the prevailing colors were yellow, scarlet, and black. Certainly an unusual combination, as contrasting colors were not commonly used at that time.

With four doors in this reception room, and easy access to seating accommodations necessary, it seems scarcely possible that all doors were kept open. The one near the window on the west wall may have been closed in order to place the Erhard piano in front of it, the player facing the room, while the sofa may have been placed on the opposite wall in front of the fireside. As usual, the circular table would have stood beneath the bronze luster, which was lighted by thirty candles and decorated with heads of Diana and Minerva, the shaft being covered with a scarlet scarf. The French Hannibal clock was placed on the mantle in front of the mirror, while two candleabras with six candles each, now in the Lower Corridor, probably accompanied it. Two sconces with lions' heads were sure to have been affixed on either side of the mantle. The French mahogany pier-table probably placed between the windows was decorated with a marble bust called *Columbus*, now in the Lower Corridor. The *Portrait of Washington* by Stuart was per-

15. BERNHARD DUKE OF SAXE-WEIMAR, *Travels*, Philadelphia, 1828, p. 171.

haps placed opposite the fireplace. It had received a new gilt frame, made by Isaac Cooper, as Dolly Madison had to leave the original frame behind when she rescued the painting in 1814. The new frame was probably removed, when the *Portrait of Martha Washington* was painted by Andrews in 1878, and both placed in the East Room with matching frames.

The room adjacent to the Ante-Chamber toward the west was the President's Cabinet (now a part of the State Dining Room). Except for a bare listing of furniture, nothing is known about the arrangement or colors in this room, nor are curtains even mentioned. All we know is that there were twenty-four rush-bottom chairs, one settee, one large mahogany sideboard and one writing table. This was certainly the one which Perdreauxville had made and for the covering of which he had used three yards of green cloth. This extraordinary length indicates that it must have been a sort of conference table, around which the President and his Cabinet could sit comfortably. Very likely it stood in the middle of the room, as did one which had been in use during Jefferson's time. Four door-screens and a Brussels carpet are the only other furnishings listed. It may well be that in this room there had been some personal belongings of Monroe which had been removed prior to the time the inventory was made.

No sooner had the arrangement of the State Rooms been completed, toward the end of 1818, when wear and tear began to reveal themselves. The first complaint came from Monroe himself who claimed that "the use of my furniture this winter has much injured it." The inventory of 1825 clearly shows that repairs were most necessary by that time. Furthermore, it was recognized under the Presidency of John Quincy Adams (1825-1829) that something had to be done about the completion of the East Room. Hence, when the major renovation was undertaken under Andrew Jackson (1829-1837), and was completed under Martin Van Buren (1837-1841), it had long been due. Except for the completely new decoration of the East Room, and for new wallpapers and curtains in most rooms, the general aspect of the reception rooms was not materially altered until the administration of President Buchanan (1857-1861).

By that time a quaint variety of chair sets and other furniture had been gradually introduced — some in the Louis XV style (1845) and others in the Gothic manner (1846) — and it is not possible to state where they were placed. But bills telling us of the regilding of upholstered chairs confirm the impression that the bulk of the original furniture was still used throughout the 50's, being kept in as good repair as possible. The Blue Room furniture must have undergone a special amount of hard usage making regilding necessary in 1849 and again in 1853. At the time of Van Buren it was covered with blue satin damask, making a complete change in the color scheme of the room necessary. Thereafter the coverings and their colors were changed several times.

Finally it must have been found that the Blue Room furniture was too outmoded, or had perhaps reached a stage beyond the possibility of decent repair. Thus a completely new set was ordered in Philadelphia from the firm of G. Vollmer, 1108 Chestnut Street.¹⁶ It was covered with blue brocatelle and richly carved and gilt in the taste that the Empress Eugénie had made fashionable by her predilection for a kind of mixture of Louis XV and Louis XVI style. The whole set consisted of sofas, small and big chairs, a center divan and two "ottomans." Though one would suspect "ottomans" to be some sort of divan, they were nothing more than another version of the very same tabourets that Mr. Ogle had disliked so much two decades earlier. When the shipment from Philadelphia arrived early in January 1860, the French furniture was ready to leave the scene. Thus in an advertisement in the Washington "Intelligencer," on January 12, 1860, we learn that the firm of J. C. McGuire and Co. were going to have a public sale of "handsome furniture, curtains, and carpets from the President's House," on January 17, at 10 o'clock, in the large, second-story room of the Sibley and Gun's building, including "suits of full gilt parlor furniture in blue and gold satin damask, two large sofas and cushions, twelve armchairs, two fire screens, six footstools and four ottomans, with curtains and carpets to match" and a variety of other items among them some "Buhl tables."¹⁶

Mr. McGuire was himself a collector; his picture collection, as well as that of William Corcoran, were among the artistic attractions of the capital. However, he naturally did not have the intuition — as nobody could have had in those days — to foresee that what he was going to sell was not old junk, but rather fine pieces reminiscent of the pageant that had passed through the White House for nearly half a century. It is not known who bought the two French sofas for \$35, or the twelve chairs for \$135.50, or all the rest, but it does not seem beyond the range of

16. The bill made out by G. Vollmer, Philadelphia (General Accounting Office 136728) mentions:

2 large gilded sofas, Blue brocatelle	\$470.
2 large gilded sofas, " "	450.
4 armchairs " "	360.
2 chairs without arms " "	260.
2 ottomans " "	80.
4 reception chairs " "	180.
1 center divan " "	285.

This set is now on loan at the Smithsonian Institution (Old building) except for the center divan, which is placed in the China Room at the White House, and for the two smaller sofas which do not seem to exist any longer. The old tradition that would have this set the one bought by Monroe, is upset by Vollmer's bill and by the fact that there is also an account stating the details of Monroe's set going to public auction on January 17, 1860. In his bill (General Accounting Office 136728) the auctioneer McGuire mentions among other items:

2 Blue gilt sofas	\$ 35.
12 Blue gilt armchairs	135.50
2 Blue gilt fire screens	16.50
4 Blue gilt cushions	21.25
6 Blue gilt footstools	15.25
4 Blue gilt ottomans	27.50

Aside from these documents, everything known of the Monroe set as to shape, measurements, and style, rules out the possibility of the so-called Monroe set being the original one.

possibility that some pieces might turn up sometime, somewhere.

Although the inventory of the White House drawn up in 1845 still mentions much of the original furniture, the articles as listed in the inventory of 1865 show that many changes were made in the 60's. It is scarcely possible to follow all the various schemes in decoration which succeed one another. Nor does it seem worthwhile to pursue all these ephemeral fashions which can be studied in many other places just as well. The first arrangement of the White House furniture was different. Though it was partly of foreign origin, it dated from the period when the mansion was rebuilt and was well adapted to its purpose. It had been well studied and conceived in order to be grouped as one unit and to serve in the part of the building devoted to the use of the public.

With wise foresight Monroe had recognized that in spite of the furnishings being solid, massive, and strong, so that they might "last, with care, more than twenty and some of them perhaps fifty years,"¹⁷ some President might occasionally wish to have arbitrary changes made for the sake of fashion. To prevent this, it seems that the President had in mind that Congress should always claim the right to legislative sanction concerning the furniture of the White House, as he deemed it to be a "national object." Lee no doubt expressed Monroe's ideas when he stated in his letter to Congress:

"The most respectable furniture to be seen in the government homes in Europe has been made for a century; although fashion has quite altered the form of private furniture, the convenience, solidity and usefulness of the public furniture has a decided preference."¹²

The necessity of keeping up the traditional appearance of the State rooms by precisely following President Monroe's intentions, has been well recognized in recent years. It is to be hoped that such a policy be permanently assured, in order to preserve as much of the genuine White House tradition as possible.

HANS HUTH.

APPENDIX

EXCERPTS FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH BILLS APPROVED BY
JAMES MONROE (GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE 37131, NO. 3).

*"Facture de 41 Colis diverses fournitures d'ordre et pour Compte et Risques de S. E. James chargées sur le Navire Americain 'Resolution,' Monroe, Président des Etats Unis d'Amérique."
Capitaine E. F. Jewett, allant à Washington,*

¹⁷. Library of Congress, Papers of the House of Representatives, 18th Congress, 1st Session, Box 3, Package 19.

For the large oval room:	Francs.	For the large oval room:	Francs.
1 <i>Lustre bronze doré mat garni de cristaux avec trophées pour 50 Lumières</i>	2,800	18 <i>Fauteuils (Le bois doré 125.-)</i> ..	4,893.02
4 <i>Bras à aigle bronze doré mat très riche branches à cornets de fruits à 6 lumières à 275.</i>	1,100	18 <i>Chaises (Le bois doré 85.0)</i>	3,454.38
1 <i>Pendule représentant Minerve appuyée sur un bouclier dans lequel est placé le mouvement, le tout posé sur un pied carré en bronze, orné de trois faces, bas relief à trophée militaire, avec moulure à base, le tout en bronze ciselé et doré or mat, et Cage</i>	2,000	4 <i>Tabourets en x (Le bois doré 125.-)</i>	939.08
1 <i>Pre. Candelabres figure de femme en bronze couleur antique portant au dessus de la tête un groupe de 6 lumières à ornements, les figures posées sur des pieds carrés avec trophées militaires, les branches et pieds dorés mat</i>	1,400	6 <i>Tabourets de pied (Le bois doré 36.-)</i>	507.72
1 <i>Pre. Chandeliers bronze ciselés dorés mat</i>	150	2 <i>Ecrans (Le bois doré 190.-)</i>	511.42
1 <i>Pre. vases de porcelaine à paysage richement décorés</i>	600	<i>Les rideaux des trois croisées de 15 pieds de hauteur, sur 6-9 de large. La draperie jettée sur un arc doré ayant pour milieu un aigle, la draperie en étoffe à rosettes, et les rideaux en 15/16 pieds cramoisi fin, encadrées d'une bordure de 6 pouces.</i>	
1 <i>Feu à ferrure à trophée doré mat.</i>	650	<i>(Détail d'une croisée. L'ajustement de la croisée pour porter la draperie, composé d'un arc et un aigle tenant dans ses griffes une branche d'olivier en un faisceau de flèches, le tout doré 240.0)</i>	9,731.76
1 <i>Console en bois doré de 5 pieds 10 pouces long. Sur 3 pieds 4 pouces haut. Pieds en double balustre, pilastres d'arrière corps et une grande bordure d'encadrement de glace sculptée et dorée.</i>	761	<i>Une écharpe pour le lustre.</i>	77.
1 <i>Glace pour le dessus de la cheminée</i>	4,203	<i>Ensemble.</i>	22,800.
1 <i>Glace pour le dessus de la console</i> }		For the sitting room or parlor:	
<i>Les parquets bordures et corniches.</i> ..	236	<i>Une table ronde en bois d'acajou, les montants à colonne, le bas à socle triangulaire, le dessus en marbre blanc de 3½ pieds de diamètre, les chapiteaux et ornements en bronze ciselé et doré au mat</i>	500.
<i>Pour la dorure</i>	524.40	<i>Un piano d'Errard frères, orné de bronze à colonnes, etc.</i>	2,600.
	4,123.40	<i>Une pendule en bronze doré mat, représentant Annibal après la bataille de Cannes</i>	900.
<i>Un grand meuble de salon bois doré avec ornements branchères d'olivier, couvert en satin double chaîne, cramoisi fin, deux tons d'or, dessiné à feuille de laurier (et un ditto)</i>	2,368.74	<i>Une paire de candelabres à Figures sur piédestaux carrés dorés mat à six lumières</i>	850.
<i>(Détail d'un sofa. Le bois du canapé ceintre 9 pieds de développement comme 4½ Fauteuils la pièce à 125,563)</i>		<i>Un lustre de bronze doré et cristal, à 30 lumières, appliques femmes et buste de Diane, branches à tête de Minerve</i>	1,500.
<i>Deux bergères (Le bois doré 145.-)</i>	798.28	<i>Deux bras à tête de lion dorés mat à 5 lumières</i>	250.
		<i>Deux feux avec Aigles, en bronze, couleur antique et ferrures soignées</i>	500.
		<i>Deux Vases de Porcelaine richement</i>	

For the sitting room or parlor:	Francs.	For the dining room:	Francs.
<i>decorés, représentant Homère et Belisaire</i>	500.	<i>fleurs</i>	6,000.
For the card room:		<i>Un service de table, en porcelaine dorée pour trente personnes</i>	
<i>Une console acajou dessus de marbre et glace comme celle ci-dessus...</i>	500.	<i>2 soupières rondes et plateau</i>	
<i>Un lustre en bronze doré mat et cristaux pour 30 lumières, branches à feuilles de lierre, appliques femmes portant des trompettes.....</i>	1,000.	<i>32 plats ovales, diverses grandeurs</i>	
<i>Une paire de candelabres sur pied rond, figure sur une boule tenant une palme en 5 lumières.....</i>	600.	<i>8 plats carrés en couvercle</i>	
<i>Deux bras à tête de lion doré mat..</i>	250.	<i>3 douzaines assiettes creuses</i>	
<i>Un feu avec lions, bronze à l'antique et ferrure</i>	350.	<i>12 ditto, plates</i>	
<i>Une Paire vases porcelaine, richement décorée, représentant des vues de Passy et la maison de Franklin</i>	460.	<i>4 Plateaux de saucière</i>	
<i>Deux glaces</i>	3,346.	<i>4 Saucières</i>	
<i>Les deux parquets et bordures et dorure</i>	443.60	<i>36 Pots à creme</i>	
For the dining room:		<i>4 Guéridons</i>	
<i>1 Lampe à boule, et cignes bronze ciselé et doré mat à 9 lumières..</i>	800.	<i>4 Saladières octogonales</i>	
<i>2 Lampes à boule, bronze vert antique garnies d'étoiles à cygnes à huit lumières chaque</i>	1,000.	<i>4 Moutardières</i>	
<i>4 Bras à tête de lion à six lumières.</i>	900.	<i>36 Coquetiers</i>	3,636.
<i>1 Surtout de table bronze ciselé, doré mat à guirlandes de fruits et vignes avec figure de Bacchus et Bacchantes et piédestaux sur lesquels sont 16 figures présentant des couronnes pour recevoir des lumières et 16 coupes pour changer à volonté, composé de 7 morceaux ensemble 13 pieds 6 pouces de long, sur 2 pieds de larg., garni de ses glaces; une riche corbeille dorée mat à 3 figures sur pied rond avec feuilles de lierre, ayant six lumières at garnies de fleurs</i>		<i>Un service de Dessert en porcelaine pour trente personnes bordure amaranthe avec cinq vignettes, représentant la force, l'agriculture, le commerce, les arts, les sciences, et les armes des Etats Unis dans le fond de l'assiette:</i>	
<i>2 Autres corbeilles dorées au mat à 3 figures sur pied rond à feuilles de lierre, ayant six lumières, garnies de fleurs.</i>		<i>3 Douzaines assiettes creuses</i>	
<i>2 Trépieds riches dorés mat copiés d'après l'antique; 2 Vases forme étrusque, dorés mat et garnies de</i>		<i>7 Ditto plates</i>	
		<i>24 Compotières</i>	
		<i>4 Jattes à fromage</i>	
		<i>4 Ditto à pieds élevés</i>	
		<i>2 Marronniers</i>	
		<i>4 Sucriers de table</i>	
		<i>4 Glaciers</i>	
		<i>4 Corbeilles</i>	2,424.
		Argenterie	
		<i>2 Terrines avec plateaux et doublage</i>	
		<i>6 Douzaines Couverts à filet</i>	
		<i>6 Cuillers à ragout</i>	
		<i>2 Cuillers à potage</i>	
		<i>36 Couverts en vermeil</i>	
		<i>36 Cuillers à café en vermeil</i>	
		<i>36 Couteaux lames vermeil, manche acre, écusson d'or; Boîtes, etc.</i>	615.
		Le tout	11,622.80
		Le tout	83,026.30
		Le Havre 15 Sept. 1817	
		Russell et Lafarge.	

"May 4, 1818. This account appears to me to be just and is approved, JAMES MONROE. [Valuing 5 1/3 Fr.—1 Dollar, this is \$15,567.43]."



HUMANISM AND THE CONTEMPORARY PRIMITIVE

THE large area of Europe, its many different peoples, its increasing spirituality and constantly growing individualism are all contributing factors in making art, since the inception of Christianity, more complex than it had ever been before. The artistic movements in France during the XIX Century are very characteristic of this situation. Different modes of expression are here intermingled to an unprecedented degree. David's and Ingres' supposedly "classical" art is at its best in its realistic aspects; the most important achievement of the "romantic" Delacroix is a new "realistic" conception of color; the "romantic" Corot achieves classical character in his figures as does the avowed "realist" Manet in his earlier work; the "realist" Courbet shows strongly romantic qualities, and so forth. What this all amounts to is a breadth of general scope and a freedom of individual expression achieved in French XIX Century painting, which is ap-



FIG. 1. — Greek Archaic Figure, Colored Cast.
— Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
(Original in Athens.)

ard; its relativity in regard to the human mind became apparent. Self-contemplation, not as a romantic indulgence but as a collective phenomenon, came to the fore. Cultural history, ethnology, pre-historical research, and the psychology of both aborigines and of children, gained in unprecedented interest. It was as if humanity had turned back to its very roots to find the answers to the puzzling problems of life. Art, in a similar way, rejected the cheap expedients of realism and emotionalism; it recollected its own fundamentals—the naive play with lines, shapes, and colors. It wanted to be a truthful expression of the human mind rather than a reflection of sensual “reality.”

It has been said that the modern movement shows

proached but not matched by the Italian Renaissance.

The impressionist movement during the last quarter of the century, heralds a short merging of these seemingly scattered forms of expression. However, as soon as the fusion is achieved it transcends its immediate scope. The new combination reveals an immanent tendency away from the three-dimensional and toward two-dimensional conceptions; away from the “pictorial” and toward the decorative; away from the imitative and toward the abstract. As with impressionism color and light shifted from being means of expression to being means of rendition, they inadvertently ceased being means at all and became an end in themselves. Color was dissected to enhance the effect of light, and unwittingly it assumed a decorative quality of its own. In short, the end of impressionism marks an emphatic turn toward the primitive.

At the turn of the century, the creative potentialities of “realism” were exhausted. The illusionist character of the “realistic” tradition was experienced to an almost painful degree. “Reality” lost its character as an absolute stand-



FIG. 2. — Roman Head Imitating Archaic Sculpture. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



FIG. 3. — Late Roman art, III Century A.D. — Battle of Romans and Barbarians, Sarcophagus. — National Museum, Rome.

certain similarities with the developments of late Roman art. These similarities are doubtlessly alluring, and they are apt to throw light on some aspects of contemporary art both where they are correct and where they fail. Whatever the esthetic merits of Roman art since the beginning of our era, it cannot be denied that the fundamental means of expression of all Christian art were developed during the first crucial centuries after the birth of Christ. A consistent conception of landscape first appeared in this period. The ideal plane ground of the relief initiated in Greek art, was perforated and gave way to an indefinite, shadowy background from which the infinity of space—a chief characteristic of Christian art—could be developed. “Painterly” illusion of depth was first achieved in the painted, architectural decorations of Pompeii.

Abstract form and decorative conception became increasingly important, while interest in classical or realistic representation receded. In short, late Roman art is decadent if judged by the highly idealized presentation of the human form in the preceding Hellenic art; on the other hand, it is an achievement which can hardly be overestimated if viewed from the ensuing artistic evolution.

It has also been noted that the Roman tendency to imitate Oriental, Egyptian, and Greek archaic works of art, has its parallel in the “primitive” influences of all kinds on the contemporary movement. This tendency has in both cases been ex-

plained as deriving from a lack of original ideas and conceptions. In this instance, the failure of the analogy between late Roman and contemporary art becomes apparent.

It is true that in times of great spiritual crises man is always inclined to look for inspiration, and for confirmation of his own aims, in sources most distant in time and place. It is equally true that the Romans did nothing but copy and imitate their far-fetched examples, while contemporary art actually tries to assimilate the sources from which it draws its inspiration. In Roman art, there is an esthetic gap between an imitated Egyptian or Greek archaic statue (Figs. 1 and 2) and, say, one of the many sarcophagus reliefs (Fig. 3). The Roman work is either an imitation, without spiritual meaning, of a formerly great style or a more or less unintentional deformation of an old tradition which may not be great art, but which is certainly of great historic significance.

The approach of contemporary art to its sources of influence is entirely different.

The modern artist is concerned not so much with the superficial appearance of his primitive paragon, as with the similarity of the process by which final shape is achieved. Indeed, this situation indicates that the modern artist's position is basically a healthy one; his concern does not lie with the looks of the finished product but with the process of creation.

The transformation of Roman art into what was to become the foundation of all Christian art was presumably un-

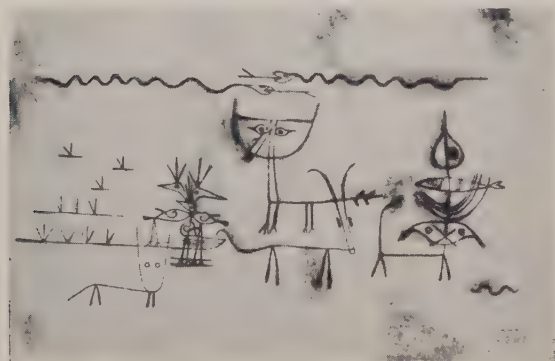


FIG. 4. — PAUL KLEE. — *The Zoo*. Courtesy of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

conscious, while conscious occupation with non-Roman art in the same period led to nothing but sterile imitation. Contrariwise, the modern artist's preoccupation with early art—Christian or non-Christian—is a revolutionary development whose basic spiritual significance, by the way, has not yet been fully explored.

It appears that most of the very profound changes in the life of the western peoples were accompanied by a new wave of the primitive. The collapse of the Old Stone Age and the rise of the agricultural man in the Late Stone Age, was associated with such a primitive wave, and also the downfall of the Roman Empire and the beginning of the medieval city states. In our time, it is most certainly the technological revolution and all it includes, which brought with it a new primitive wave. These crises were of such catastrophic character that they could not be met by individual effort. Collective forces rallied to meet them. This fact lays bare the peculiar connection between the primitive and the collective.

Primitive civilizations are based on the collective character of the human mind; they are more of the world within than of the world without. Primitive imagination is not subjective in the sense of the romantic; it is a collective imagination which expresses its subjectivity through a super-personal concept whose formality is akin to that of the classic. The predominance of collective imagination over sensual impressions made on individuals by environment, accounts for the collective character of primitive art.

However, the contemporary primitive differs from previous primitive periods in several important aspects. First, the modern primitive is on the whole more interested in painting than in sculpture; second, it favors a distinctly asymmetric design; and finally, it shows a broad range of individual expression which is definitely lacking in preceding primitive periods. All these points contribute to the obvious fact that the modern primitive has a more romantic complexion than any other primitive.

The fact that the primitive of today is ahead of the conceptions of society at large—which, one would assume, ought to be in accordance with this collective expression—appears to be a contradiction of its collective character. However, it is exactly here that the

extremes touch. Extreme romanticism is certainly an exaltation of the subject, a distinct revelation of the individual subconscious. But the subconscious is not only the most secret and hidden part of the individual, it is also the point of contact with the most universal qualities of life—with “nature,” with the collective consciousness of humankind. In the original primitive society, the subconscious was the dominating factor of the group, and art is therefore in harmony with this general mentality. In our society, reason is accepted as the common denominator, and an art like the modern primitive, which has made new contact with collective consciousness, will be accepted only slowly and reluctantly.

The individualism of the XIX Century continued a tradition well established



FIG. 5. — PAUL KLEE. — Landscape with Blue Birds. Courtesy of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

since the Renaissance. In the contemporary primitive, individualism seems paradoxical because it is so inextricably bound up with a primarily collective mode of expression. All we can say about this peculiar situation is that it is no more of a paradox than many other aspects of contemporary civilization. Indeed, it is perhaps the most urgent problem not only of contemporary art, but of the contemporary mind in general, to find a solution to this paradox.

The common objection that contemporary art has lost contact with the people at large has, of course, not been made for the first time in our day. Yet it was never art which retracted its steps; it was the general public that caught up with it. Behind today's objection stands the general reluctance to acknowledge the collective tendencies of our time. The objection would be justified if it were true that these collective tendencies must of necessity destroy the high level of individual liberty so far attained. A survey of the broad scope of contemporary art and of its great range of individual manifestations, goes far to show that the paradox of our situation today can be solved satisfactorily. The democratic conception of pluralism is the obvious means with which to reconcile the supposed paradox of collectivism versus individualism. As Walt Whitman expressed it:

"One's-self I sing, a single separate person,
Yet utter the word Democracy, the word En-Masse.
For freest action form'd under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing."



FIG. 6. — GEORGES BRAQUE. — *Le Guéridon*, 1928. — Museum of Modern Art, New York. Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art.

Modern art accepts the collective character of its primitive mode of expression, while at the same time keeping up the variability of individual interpretation. The contemporary primitive presents a collective concept which has thoroughly absorbed the romantic individualism of the Christian era.

Obviously, the difficulty to achieve general acceptance of the new primitive lies with the seemingly contradictory currents underlying its character. One of these currents is excessive individualism. It is described in the *Manifesto of futurist painting*, 1910, with the following words: "Exalt every kind of originality, of boldness, of extreme violence. . . . Rebel against the tyranny of the words 'harmony' and 'good taste'" The other current, on the contrary, is concerned with the collective character of the artist as craftsman. It found one of its earliest literary expressions in the manifesto of the *Bauhaus*: "The old dualistic world-concept which envisaged the ego in opposition to the universe is rapidly losing ground. In its place is rising the idea of universal unity in which all opposing forces exist in a state of absolute balance. . . . The ultimate, if distant, goal . . . is the collective work of art. . . ."

Most of the paradoxes involved in the situation today may be understood, and even solved, with this seemingly contradictory origin of modern art in mind. That this origin is not actually contradictory is easily understood when one considers



FIG. 7. — HENRI MATISSE. — Decorative Composition. — Museum of Modern Art, New York. Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art.



FIG. 8. — HENRI MATISSE. — *Odalisque*. — Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art.*

creative process, stressing the symbolism of form and the significance of the material in which the work is executed. Consciously or unconsciously, it is extremely sceptical of the arbitrary freedom of the artist because it adheres to the universal principle of growth which is a collective principle.

If one accepts the possibility of this solution one will also find a sound basis for judging the trends and tendencies of the modern movement. During the profound revolution undergone by modern art, there was a definite tendency to cut entirely the bonds with individual expression. The idea behind this particular movement was that only a completely "objective" collectivism could get rid of the supposedly effeminate subjectivism from which art was suffering. This extreme tendency has wielded an important influence in the general de-

that both currents stem from the same conviction, namely, that the previous forms of art were outlived in every respect. As their premises were the same and only their conclusions differed, it is understandable that the two currents should meet again in the course of development. Whether it be individualistic or not, the new primitive is always concerned with the



FIG. 9. — HENRI ROUSSEAU. — *Jungle with a Lion*, 1904-1906. — Lillie B. Bliss Collection, Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art.*

velopment, but its contributions were more theoretical than creative. To-day, these theoretical contributions can be seen for what they really were: not artistic achievements but experiments in a still undiscovered field.

The abstract conceptions of the contemporary primitive do not necessarily mean that this new art is entirely without "realistic" subject matter. Indeed, most of it is very concrete. Abstraction in this as in any other case, means that attention is not directed primarily toward sensual perception; that imaginative creation supersedes the purely imitative factors. The concreteness of the contemporary primitive lies in the fact that this mode of expression grasps its objects, motifs and themes the more ardently, the more it finds itself compelled by imagination to "distort" them. The problem is not that of realism versus abstraction, but of different conceptions of reality. Art would indeed be very limited if it had to rely exclusively on visual perception.

The pluralism and the romantic mood of the contemporary primitive—its individualism and its subjectivity—find their true expression in its great variety of artistic personalities. Accepting the general basis of primitive conception for the whole movement, one can characterize the different personalities and the various trends of this movement, according to their individual modes of expression.



FIG. 10. — HENRI ROUSSEAU. — Portrait of Joseph Brummer, 1909. — Dr. Franz Meyer Collection, Zurich, Switzerland. *Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.*



FIG. 11. — Ivory Coast, Toma. — Mask. *Courtesy of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.*

acter; its basic means of realization are ornamental lines and abstract forms. Klee's work is not in a state of dependence on but of supremacy over, sensual perceptions and experiences.

The CLASSICAL counterpart of Klee's romantic primitive may be exemplified by the work of Georges Braque (Fig. 6) in which real objects are plainly discernible. Everything is flat and parallel to the picture plane; the suggested depth lies in the sheets of paper put loosely on top of one another. Most shadows are changed to ornamental shapes. Often parts of the outlines are intentionally displaced so that an interlocking effect is achieved; many shapes penetrate one another. Different textures of pigment, rough and smooth, heavy impastos and thin layers, are used to vary the ornamental effects. But the formal scheme is balanced in spite of the shifty configurations; geometric order

For instance, a chiefly subjective, ROMANTIC interpretation of the primitive is found in Paul Klee (Figs. 4 and 5). His work shows a dream-like atmosphere; nothing in it recalls the experiences of the sensuous world. But his work is at the same time a truthful image of the capricious visions of a dream and therefore as concrete and real in its own right as any "realistic" painting. Nor does its romantic expressiveness make it lose its primitive char-

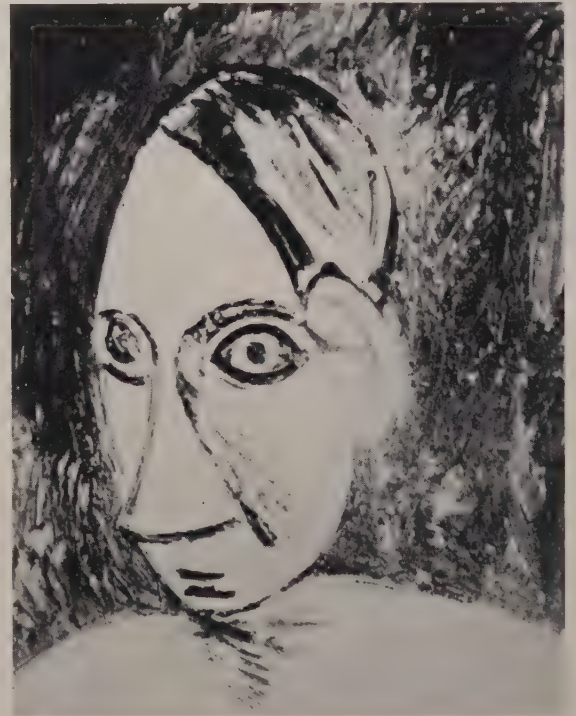


FIG. 12. — PICASSO. — Head of a Man. *Courtesy of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.*



FIG. 13. — PICASSO. — *Guernica*, 1937. — The Artist's Collection. Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

is kept in the face of an almost overwhelming variety. Braque's paintings are more than mere ornaments pleasing to the eye; like music, they play variations on the immanent laws of nature. This is not a primitive presentation of a psychological phenomenon like Klee's painting; it is a harmonious configuration of the inner order which lies behind mere appearance. It is primitive because it handles the objects arbitrarily, subordinating their shapes to the ornamental exigencies of the work; it is classical because it is created in a mood of static balance between clearly defined shapes.

The STATIC quality of the classic has been retained also by Henry Matisse, (Figs. 7, 8 and 17) but Braque's peculiar space-conception makes place here for an entirely flat, decorative pattern. As in Braque, incidental objects and surrounding configurations are made intricate parts of a well-balanced design. Lights and shadows are, however, to the greatest extent omitted. Color is almost absent in Braque, while Matisse uses bright hues in sophisticated nuances that enhance each other yet are kept in much the same balance as the design. The particular character of Matisse is brought about by merging a decorative color-design with a static pattern of flat planes.

A DYNAMISM which is close to romantic expressiveness is found, for instance, in Rufino Tamayo (Fig. 19). The various diagonal directions enhance the stark expression in his work. There is primeval primitiveness as all incidentals of sensuous appearance are eliminated and the shapes, lines, and colors contribute to a concentrated and powerful utterance of emotions. The primitive is here highly expressive of very real feeling.

But not only static and dynamic, classic and romantic connotations are to



FIG. 14. — Ivory Coast, Liberia. — Wooden Figure. *Courtesy of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.*

cally primitive whole. The stark "reality" of Rousseau is due not alone to his peculiar combination of realistic detail and primitive vision; with him it is not a case of intentional distortion or exaggeration for the sake of increased expressiveness as is the case in romantic painting. The sensual appearance of the objects is superseded by their inner image, the realistic details are used like bricks to build up a configuration of imaginative primitiveness.

The career of Pablo Picasso reflects

be found in the contemporary movement; even the seeming paradox of a "REALISTIC PRIMITIVE" is an important part of it. In Henry Rousseau's paintings (Figs. 9, 10 and 18) the individual configurations and details are plainly realistic. However, realistic leaves do not make a realistic tree, and realistic features do not make a realistic face. The combinations in which these realistic details appear are new and different. They cannot be understood as details of a realistic painting but only as parts of a basi-



FIG. 15. — Ivory Coast, Toma. — Mask. *Courtesy of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.*

both the various stages of the contemporary primitive and the assimilation of its most influential sources. But it has by now become apparent that Picasso is not exclusively concerned with purely formalistic problems. His conception is imaginative, but what he is searching for is a new "reality." His work shows not only a play with shapes and lines but an increasingly disciplined combination of different perspective views merged in such a way as to show the object's unity and its incessantly varying aspects.

Only at a very mature stage of his career was it possible for Picasso to create a work of such embracing significance as the mural *Guernica* (Fig. 13). The seeming arbitrariness of all the earlier attempts of the artist is focused in the ordered subjectivity of this picture. Here are, once more, the social romanticism of Picasso's earliest paintings, the expressive lines of the dynamic primitive, the primeval power of the Negro period (Figs. 11, 12, 14 and 16), the classical precision of cubism, the dream-like concreteness of the realistic primitive, and even the lack of color characteristic of many of his previous endeavors. By being transformed into a well disposed order, all these contradictory elements have become fused and have grown into one objective representation.

A triangle divides the picture into three sections, several vertical planes cut across this triangle, and everywhere a displacement of shapes breaks up the rigidity of this fundamental scheme. The theme itself is highly emotional. Inspired by the brutal and useless air-bombing of the town of Guernica in the Spanish Civil War, the artist makes no attempt to render the scene as it might actually have happened. His figures, beyond representing this particular incident, are just as expressive of the conditions which made this incident possible as they are, quite universally, symbolic of the common afflictions of all creation. The pierced horse in the center expresses the suffering of all creatures, human and animal.



FIG. 16. — PICASSO. — *Figures in a Landscape*. Courtesy of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

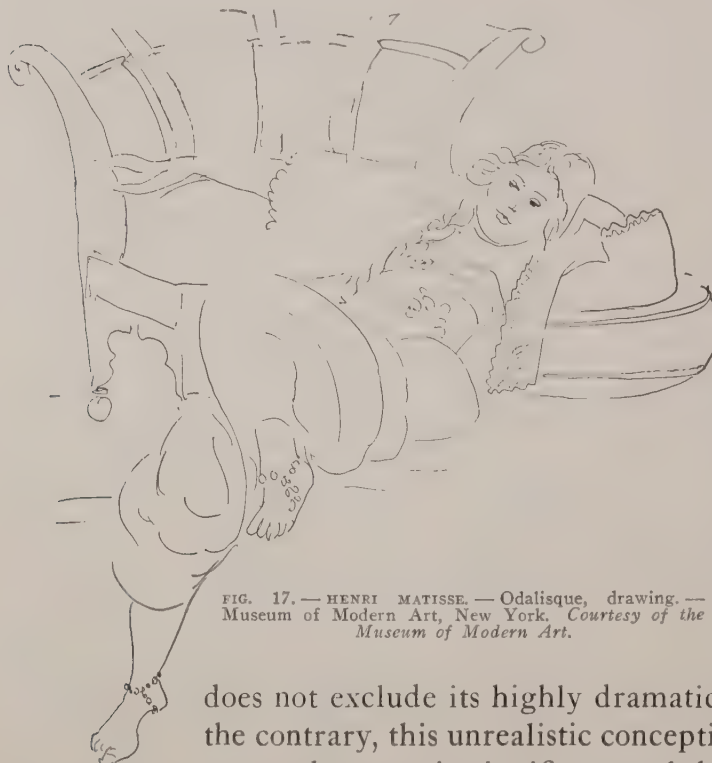


FIG. 17. — HENRI MATISSE. — *Odalisque*, drawing. — Museum of Modern Art, New York. Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art.

The theme is repeated at the left in the yelling mother with the dead child, and to the right in the woman who falls burning from the window. Contrasted with this suffering is the indifferent animal-power of the bull, the electric eye, and the dismembered strength of the dead warrior. Mediating between these extremes are the horror-stricken women rushing toward the left; they are still in possession of their animal power but anticipate the fate of the other figures.

The ornamental, abstract conception of form in this work

does not exclude its highly dramatic and expressive qualities. Quite the contrary, this unrealistic conception enhances the stark expressiveness and magnetic significance of the whole. This painting goes far to show how creative imagination is freed by disregarding the restrictions inherent in the realistic mode of expression. Human values are realized here in concrete form; the primitive has created a powerful symbol of humanity. The work is a confession, by contradiction, of divine law and divine love. It has the same quality as the Greek tragedy in bringing about a catharsis in the spectator. Beholding it, one recalls Sophocles' Oedipus who is addressed by the chorus as follows:

"Nay, I cannot e'en look on thee, though there is much that I would fain ask, fain learn, much that draws my wistful gaze — with such a shuddering dust thou fill me!"

And Oedipus answers:

"Why was I to see, when sight could show me nothing sweet?"

This mural is not built from preconceived forms and ready-made patterns like so many modern paintings which, though they apparently belong to the primitive school, have betrayed its fundamental principle of growth, that of "nature in its manner of operation." The academic abstractionists and surrealists are seeking a solution at any price. They are trying to impose order from without instead of seeking order from within. But the solution which is in mental balance and psychological harmony between the individual and the collective, can be achieved



FIG. 18. — HENRI ROUSSEAU. — *The Jungle*. — Carpenter Collection. Courtesy of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

only by constant interaction between emotion and "nature," feeling and "reality," or will and reason. How much Picasso struggled with "nature" can, among many other examples, be seen from the long series of preliminary sketches to *Guernica*. It is not by the easy way that he arrives at his abstractions, but by constant digestion, which makes growth not only possible but necessary. The great thing about this painting is, that though its form is based on the

collective mode of the primitive, its content reveals the highest humanism. It

is an assertion that the dignity of man is an integral part of his collective character. The apparent contradiction between the individual and the collective is not explained away, but welded into a higher unity whose creative power stems from its very polarity.

But how was this solution made possible? The answer is that the ideal of modern democracy — a new balance and interaction between individual and commu-



FIG. 19. — RUFINO TAMAYO. — *The Horse and the Lion*. — Courtesy of the Valentine Gallery, New York.

nal conception — has become a reality in the republic of art. The chief content of modern collective tendencies is pluralism. Ours is no longer the one-track collectivism prevailing in previous primitive periods, with their small, restricted communities, nor do we adhere to the reactionary collective tendencies of totalitarianism. It is a collectivism based on the manifold aspects of our civilization, the ever-larger communities with the different peoples constituting them, and with their basic acceptance of the dignity of the individual human being.

Only against this broad background is it possible to appreciate the pluralism of contemporary primitive art, which in turn gives insight into the spiritual movements of our time.

PAUL M. LAPORTE.



B I B L I O G R A P H Y

SALVADOR TOSCANO.—*Arte Precolombino de Mexico y de la America Central*, with a foreword by MANUEL TOUSSAINT.—Mexico, Instituto de Investigaciones Esteticas, Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, 1944, 557 p., ill.

This large and lavishly illustrated book is intended to serve as an introduction and guide to the art and art history of the peoples of Middle America previous to their discovery and conquest by Europeans. We need hardly elaborate on the importance of the subject. The art world in general has been slow to recognize the significance of American Indian art to the history of world art, but most of us are aware that this is a rapidly developing area of interest at the present time, and is due to receive much more attention in the near future than it has in the past. TOSCANO's book is, of course, a symbol of this growing recognition, but it is also a very definite step forward toward a more widespread appreciation of American Indian art and its more complete acceptance by students of art history.

The author has properly attempted to place his study of the esthetic qualities of Middle American art objects against a background of archeological history. This, in my opinion, fills a real need at the present time, for the principal obstruction in the way of an art student's attempt to get a general picture of Mexican-Mayan art, is the difficulty in placing the various traditions and styles that exist into an historical and geographic framework. There is also the further difficulty of trying to conquer the strangeness and highly esoteric nature of so many of the objects—formidable barriers difficult for even the specialist to overcome. Facing these problems, TOSCANO has attempted a synthesis by combining the points of view of both the artist and the archeologist—the only approach to the eventual placement of the study of American Indian art on solid foundations.

A preliminary chapter concerns the various methods of approach to primitive art and a discussion of the major themes in the history of Middle American art. The second section, entitled *Art and history*, is a brief summary of the archeological history of Middle America divided primarily according to areas and culture groups, the subheadings including, for example, *The Maya Culture*, *The Cultures of Central Mexico*, and *The Zapotec and Mixtec Cultures*. The remaining sections of the book then deal topically with each of the following categories of the arts: architecture, sculpture, painting, ceramics, mosaic, feather work and metal work. Interspersed throughout these pages are a great many photographs of representative buildings and objects, and at the end of each section is an extensive bibliography.

Considering the broad scope and design of the volume, I hesitate to find fault in regard to details, but from my point of view as an archeologist, I must make some reservations to my overall expression of admiration of the work. The archeological reconstruction is somewhat uneven. For the most part the results of the more recent excavations and studies have been well utilized, but there are certain portions which show some lack of critical understanding of modern archeological thought. One example to indicate my meaning is the categorical statement that maize or Indian corn originated from *teocentli* in Mexico or Guatemala (p. 20), with the implication that this gave rise to the development of the high cultures of Middle America. Such a statement on the origin of corn was acceptable fifteen years ago but has been strongly criticized many times since then and has been generally discarded as probably incorrect. This is a point of fundamental importance and should not have been treated so lightly.

A somewhat irritating omission, especially regrettable in a book intended for a general audience, is the lack

of a scale or other indication of the size of the objects illustrated.

Aside from such imperfections the book is to be commended as a pioneer work in a very difficult field. It will be extremely useful to the Spanish-reading public, and generally so for its large number of well reproduced and well selected illustrations of the finest products of the Middle American artists.

GORDON F. EKHOLM.

RODOLFO PALLUCCHINI.—*I Dipinti della Galleria Estense a Modena*.—Roma, Cosmopolita Casa Editrice, 1945, ill.

This is a de luxe volume of more than 300 pages of text and 238 illustrations in half-tone, many of them full-page and in some instances even with additional details, and none of them smaller than half-page. How wonderful it would be to have such catalogues of the Uffizi and the Pitti, of the great galleries of Rome, Venice or Naples! The Galleria Estense in Modena is, after all, only a provincial gallery; in quantity and quality, a modest remnant left after two enormous depredations—one when the heirlooms of the Este were seized by Cardinal Aldobrandini in 1598, the other when an impoverished scion of that great house sold his hundred best paintings to Dresden. Its main contents are productions of later Court painters and paintings acquired piecemeal from dealers, and—particularly under Duke Ercole III around 1800—from suppressed churches and convents.

The collection thus consists of only a few outstanding pictures—the vast majority being interesting solely to art historians. I wonder whether the obligatory interest in the forgotten men—natural in a scholar like PROFESSOR PALLUCCHINI who was the director of the gallery for several years—has not somewhat exaggerated their importance. Instead of the selection of about 200 paintings for rather pretentious illustration, the reproduction in small size of all, or almost all, the 617 paintings would have better fitted the character of the gallery. Catalogues of this type, in Berlin, Dresden, and later various other museums, were more helpful to the history of art than this de luxe edition of middle-class works will probably prove.

The text offers the same combination of wealth and restraint as the illustrative part. The typographical arrangement is indeed opulent, but PALLUCCHINI's comments do not offer the reader all he might be entitled to expect. They report exhaustively on the history and the state of preservation of the paintings; they also deal thoroughly with the various attributions made by visiting colleagues not only in print but also orally. The main stress of his remarks, however, is devoted to a thorough-going analysis of the painting under discussion, and a statement of its stylistic characteristics.

His is not an "appreciation" such as is offered in certain museum handbooks but a genuine investigation into problems of form, which in some instances results in interesting re-attributions of paintings.

Questions referring to subject-matter are, on the contrary, treated cavalierly, if at all. This leads to various mistakes and omissions. No. 51 is certainly not a woman fainting, but the typical woman in labor; No. 240 is cer-

tainly not *Tomyris*, whose story the representation does not fit. No. 14 is called *An Episode from the Life of Abraham*, but what episode is represented?

A catalogue of this type should offer such information just as it should refer, in the case of No. 420, to *Psalms* 85, 11, the source of the inscribed passage; or in the case of No. 479, explain the very unusual combination of a circumcision of Jesus with the glorification of His name. Here the subject-matter determines the formal construction of the painting.

Of course, iconology is not an independent goal, but only an auxiliary means for the better understanding of works of art. Still, a sound formal analysis seems hardly possible without knowledge of the subject represented, since both tradition and the patron's wishes must be correctly calculated in order to obtain a fair estimate of the artist's personal expression.

It is the same with the question of dependence on models by other artists. Again as in the past, the significance of such borrowing has sometimes been overrated; not what the artist takes from others but what he makes of it, is all important. But to gauge the latter exactly the historian has to know the model which gave inspiration. PALLUCCHINI does not mention that No. 60 is copied from Raphael's ceiling in the Farnasina, and that No. 228 is completely dependent on Michelangelo's *Ganymede* drawing for Cavalieri, as already noted by H. THODE in his *Kritische Untersuchungen*. Both models are so well known that PALLUCCHINI can hardly have overlooked them; he must have left them out on purpose, perhaps because of his reluctance to mar the single-mindedness of his esthetic approach to the work of art by iconographic and otherwise "philological" considerations. His attitude accepts a modernism which to my mind is already of yesterday, trailing in the wake of impressionistic *l'art pour l'art*.

I shall finish with a word on No. 326, a portrait acquired about 1925 under the name of Guercino, later ascribed to Sustermans, and now claimed for Benedetto Gennari II, on the authority of HEINRICH BODMER. PALLUCCHINI identifies the sitter as the poet and politician *Girolamo Graziani*, on the basis of a presumed resemblance to an engraved *Portrait of Graziani* in Lorenzo Crasso's *Degli Elogii degli Huomini Letterati*, II, p. 324, of 1666, and because of Graziani's rôle in arranging the marriage of Beatrice d'Este to James Duke of York in 1573. He dates the portrait in the year of Gennari's visit to England in 1574. This thesis is contradicted by several facts: First, Graziani's very detailed biography (in: G. TIRABOSCHI's *Biblioteca Modenese* III, p. 12ff.) does not mention a journey of Graziani to England and therefore he could not have been painted there by Gennari in 1574. Second, Graziani's engraved portrait to which PALLUCCHINI refers is only a mediocre reversed copy of an earlier engraving of 1647 published in the *Gloria degli Incogniti*. A portrait of a man in his forties must not be used to identify him at the age of almost seventy. Moreover the resemblance is far from striking. In the engraving Graziani looks stocky and rather vulgar; he can hardly have changed into the elegant courtier represented in the portrait at Modena.

E. TIETZE-CONRAT.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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BIBLIOGRAPHY in this issue is by GORDON F. EKHOLM, Assistant Curator of Ethnology, American Museum of Natural History, New York and by E. TIETZE-CONRAT page 63

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*Published in Paris from 1859 to 1939. Publication
now in its American edition continued in New York
from October 1942*

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
GEORGES WILDENSTEIN

*Subscription price for the Gazette des Beaux-Arts is
\$12.00 yearly, Single copy \$1.50, published monthly.*

19 East 64th Street, New York 21, N. Y. Telephone REgent 4-3300

140, Faubourg St. Honoré, Paris 8^e